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Israel's Gantz, Netanyahu face deadline to reach power-sharing deal

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CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Called to duty

Army Corps of Engineers adds virus preparation to long list of specialties

By BRIAN K. SULLIVAN
Bloomberg

Spring rains were already swelling the Mississippi River, threatening floods along a 700-mile stretch between St. Louis and Baton Rouge, La., when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers showed up at a convention center in Manhattan in late March.

The Army Corps is responsible for most of the country's disaster-response infrastructure. Primarily, that means keeping the Mississippi at bay. In this case, however, it meant transforming the Javits Center into a 1,000-bed field hospital for coronavirus pa-

tients overflowing New York City's hospitals.

The coinciding threats of flood season and COVID-19 have already put a strain on the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which works closely with the Corps and coordinates the logistics of getting supplies and aid around the country. But the Corps itself is less likely to be swamped by the pandemic.

"They are probably not going to be overtaxed by this," says Tim Frazier, the director of Georgetown University's emergency and disaster management program. "They are very good at moving stuff, they are very good at logistics, and they

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Go online to read the latest news on the virus outbreak
stripes.com/coronavirus

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot listens to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Col. Aaron Reisinger as she tours the construction of the new McCormick Place alternate care facility in Chicago on Friday.

Nam Y. HUN/AP



Peace process gets boost as Taliban releases 20 captives

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Taliban released 20 prisoners Sunday — the first public release of detainees by the militant group since it signed an agreement with the U.S. in February. The move breathes new life into a peace process that has stumbled from the outset.

The prisoners were handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross in the southern city of Kandahar, said Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, who provided photos of the release to journalists.

Prisoner releases are a key part of the U.S. deal with the Taliban, which spells out conditions that must be met if foreign forces are to completely withdraw from

Afghanistan within 14 months. Sunday's prisoner release comes more than a month after what was originally set out in the U.S.-Taliban deal, which called for up to 5,000 militants and up to 1,000 detainees held by the insurgents to be freed by March 10.

The Afghan government, which was sidelined from negotiations that led to the U.S.-Taliban deal, initially balked at a prisoner re-

lease but has since released 300 militants over the last week.

After American pressure, the government announced a compromise with the militant group in late March, only for talks to break down again last week over who would get freed.

Divisions within the government have also delayed the start of intra-Afghan talks, another key part of the U.S.-Taliban deal.

The release comes days after the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Scott Miller, flew to Qatar for talks with the Taliban. The meeting focused on curbing violence as part of a military channel established in the U.S.-Taliban deal, the U.S. military's press office in Kabul told Stars and Stripes.

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Apple, Google to adapt phones for virus tracking

Associated Press

Apple and Google launched a major joint effort to leverage smartphone technology to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

New software the companies plan to add to phones would make it easier to use Bluetooth wireless technology to track down people who may have been infected by coronavirus carriers. The idea is to help national governments roll out apps for so-called "contact tracing" that will run on iPhones

and Android phones alike.

Software developers have already created such apps in countries including Singapore and China to try to contain the pandemic. In Europe, the Czech Republic says it will release such an app this month. Britain, Germany and Italy are among other countries developing such apps.

Apple and Google plan to release their toolkit in May and say user privacy and security are baked into its design. Privacy and civil liberties activists have

warned that such apps need to be so governments cannot abuse them to track their citizens.

Security experts also note that technology alone cannot effectively track down and identify people who may have been infected by COVID-19 carriers. Such efforts will require public health care workers to track people in the physical world as well as other tools, they say. In South Korea and China, such efforts have included credit card and public transit records.

EXCHANGE RATES

[illegible]

WEATHER OUTLOOK

MONDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



MONDAY IN EUROPE

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MIDEAST/WAR

Israeli president rejects coalition request

Denial of extension means country may be forced into another election

By JOSEF FEDERMAN
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel's president on Sunday turned down a request from Blue and White party leader Benny Gantz for a two-week extension to form a new coalition government.

The announcement by President Reuven Rivlin means that Gantz and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have a midnight deadline Monday night to reach a power-sharing deal. If they fail, the country could be forced into a fourth consecutive election in just over a year.

Gantz asked Rivlin for the extension on Saturday night, claiming he was close to a deal with Netanyahu. But in his response, Rivlin said the extension would not be possible under the "current circumstances."

Gantz last month was given the task of forming a government by Rivlin, after a narrow majority of lawmakers said they backed him to become prime minister. But in an abrupt about-face, Gantz later announced he would instead try to form an "emergency" government with Netanyahu's Likud party to deal with the country's coronavirus crisis.

Since then, negotiations on a power-sharing agreement between Gantz and Netanyahu appear to have stalled. At the same time, Gantz's Blue and White alliance has fragmented, leaving him with a shrunken version of

DID YOU KNOW?

If Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu can win the backing of a majority of lawmakers in the 120-seat parliament, he would then get a chance to form a government. He needs two more votes to eke out a majority.

SOURCE: Associated Press

his original party and few viable options.

The crisis has given the embattled Netanyahu, who is set to go on trial for serious corruption charges, a new lease on life.

Netanyahu's hand-picked justice minister last month shuttered the court system, delaying the prime minister's trial until at least May. And by persuading his rival to seek a unity deal, Gantz put on hold plans to pass legislation that would have prevented Netanyahu from serving as prime minister in the future. With Blue and White in tatters and the clock ticking, it is unclear whether Gantz can revive his legislative agenda.

In a statement, Blue and White said negotiations were ongoing. It quoted Gantz as telling Netanyahu that he remained committed to agreements they have already reached, with the hope of "forming the national emergency government that the country wants and needs."

Rivlin's office said he made his



ODED BALIY/AP

Election campaign billboards March 1 show Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, right, and Benny Gantz in Bnei Brak, Israel. Israel's President Reuven Rivlin on Sunday turned down a request from Gantz, the leader of the Blue and White party, for a two-week extension to form a new coalition. Gantz and Netanyahu have a midnight deadline Monday to reach a power-sharing deal.

decision after speaking to Netanyahu as well. It noted that Netanyahu gave no indication that an agreement was near. He said he would reconsider if both sides together requested an extension in order to finalize a deal.

Netanyahu's Likud party put out a statement asking Rivlin to give Netanyahu an opportunity

to form his own coalition. This would give him an extra month to continue to pursue a deal with Gantz, but from a much stronger negotiating position.

If Netanyahu can win the backing of a majority of lawmakers in the 120-seat parliament, he would then get a chance to form a government. After recruiting

one defector from the opposing camp, Netanyahu currently has the backing of 59 lawmakers. He needs two more to eke out a majority.

But if Netanyahu is unable to do so, the parliament, would have 21 days to select an alternative prime minister.

Indian, Pakistan troops trade heavy fire in Kashmir; 3 killed

Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India — Tensions between India and Pakistan flared again in disputed Kashmir on Sunday as the archrivals' armies bargaged each other with heavy artillery fire, killing at least three civilians, Indian police said.

Each side accused the other of starting the shelling and targeting civilian areas in violation of the 2003 cease-fire accord along the so-called Line of Control that divides Kashmir between India and Pakistan.

India and Pakistan have a long history of bitter relations over Kashmir, with both claiming it in its entirety. They have fought two of their three wars since 1947 over their competing claims to the Himalayan region.

Shri Ram Ambarkar, an Indian police officer, said three civilians, including a woman and a child, were killed when shells fired from the Pakistani army hit homes two locations along the Line of Control in the Kupwara area of Indian-controlled Kashmir on Sunday evening.

Ambarkar said some people were also feared injured as authorities launched a

rescue operation amid heavy cross-border shelling in the area.

Since Friday, Pakistan's military has charged India with repeated violations of the cease-fire along the frontier.

A Pakistani army statement said heavy artillery fire by India "deliberately targeted civilians" on the Pakistani side of the border.

The military said Sunday that two people were seriously hurt overnight and had to be evacuated. On Saturday, the Pakistani military said six people were hurt, including a child, when Indian soldiers launched a barrage of rockets and mortars into civilian areas of Pakistan.

Last weekend, five Indian special forces and five rebels were killed in fierce fighting in the area along the frontier.

The latest fighting has seen for the first time this year use of heavy artillery targeting civilian areas.

Rebel groups in Indian-held Kashmir demand that the territory be united either under Pakistani rule or as an independent country. India accuses Pakistan of arming and training anti-India rebels and also helping them by providing gunfire as cover for incursions into the Indian side. Paki-



MUKHTAR KHAN/AP

A Kashmiri boy walks past an Indian paramilitary soldier in Srinagar, Indian-controlled Kashmir, on Saturday. At least three civilians were killed Sunday from artillery fire between Indian and Pakistani troops, Indian police said.

stan denies this, saying it offers only moral and diplomatic support to the militants and to Kashmiris who oppose Indian rule.

Rebels have been fighting Indian rule since 1989. Nearly 70,000 people have been killed in the uprising and the ensuing Indian military crackdown.

Envoy: Fighting straining Libya's health systems

Bloomberg

An escalation in Libya's yearlong war is straining the North African country's ability to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, the acting United Nations envoy said, as foreign powers intervening continue to flout an arms embargo.

"It's incredibly reckless. It's inhumane, it's stretching the capacity of local authorities and the health infrastructure that is already decimated," Stephanie Williams said last week. "And they're whistling past the graveyard, that's what they're doing."

The intensified fighting has closed down one of Tripoli's largest hospitals, which came under three days of shelling as the country reported at least 24 cases of coronavirus infections.

It also followed the announcement of a humanitarian truce between the internationally recognized government in Tripoli and eastern strongman Khalifa Haftar, who controls the country's shuttered oil fields and had set off the fighting last year when he tried to take the capital.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

UK base test processing means fast results

By BRIAN FERGUSON
Stars and Stripes

Service members in the United Kingdom are getting their coronavirus test results sooner than they used to because the U.S. Air Force hospital at RAF Lakenheath has begun processing tests for the virus in-house.

The number of positive cases at Lakenheath and nearby RAF Mildenhall has also decreased since testing began, said Lt. Col. Douglas Michael, the public health officer for the 48th Medical Group. But that drop was likely due to measures taken across the U.K. to stem the spread of the virus, which in some cases causes severe respiratory illness that can lead to death.

"We suspect [the decrease] is due to approximately two weeks of social distancing and U.K. lockdown measures," Michael said.

A Defense Department order to commanders at installations worldwide to stop publicly announcing new coronavirus cases among their personnel barred him from putting a number on cases at the base.

The hospital at Lakenheath has been sending coronavirus tests to its own lab, around 5 miles away at RAF Feltwell, for analysis since March 30, allowing samples to be processed seven days a week and the results to be returned the same day, officials from the 48th Medical Group said.

"The in-house testing capability cut what was a 3- to 7-day result process to a less than 24-hour result," said Lt. Col. Shawn



MATTHEW PLEW/U.S. Air Force

Tech. Sgt. Jordan Rigor, 48th Medical Support Squadron, conducts coronavirus testing at RAF Feltwell, England, on April 9. Having the capability to test locally has reduced the wait time for results from 5 to 7 days to less than 24 hours for U.S. service members serving at three bases in England.

McFarland, 48th Surgical Operations Squadron commander.

Previously, tests were sent to British hospitals or a lab in Dayton, Ohio, said Maj. Sybil Taunton, spokeswoman for the 48th Fighter Wing.

Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany also processes samples to see if a person has the virus, but shipping a test swab

from bases outside Germany and getting results back can take days. Some bases, such as Naval Support Activity Naples, Italy, have chosen instead to send their tests to local hospitals, hoping for faster results.

The 48th Medical Group has taken other measures to try to minimize infection, including setting up a drive-thru testing area

outside of the hospital, Taunton said.

A clinic also has been set up in a deployment tent, allowing patients with symptoms of coronavirus infection or who have been in contact with an infected person to seek care without entering the hospital and potentially bringing the virus with them, said Maj. Clinton Borchardt, the 48th Med-

ical Group's family health medical director.

Other measures to reduce exposure to the virus, such as telework, social distancing, wearing face coverings when distancing is not possible, and limiting gatherings outside immediate family to no more than two people, have also been taken at the base, and nearby Mildenhall and Feltwell.

Nonessential services, such as the arts and crafts center, outdoor recreation, auto hobby shop and fitness centers have been closed, and some services, such as access to chaplains and mental health professionals, are only being offered electronically.

The 48th Medical Group supports more than 27,000 service members and their dependents at the three bases, which are within a 12-mile radius of each other.

Meanwhile, new Pentagon guidance for coronavirus testing released Wednesday said patients with mild symptoms who can recover outside a clinical setting should not be tested.

But high-risk or mission-essential personnel can be tested at local command discretion after consultation with medical staff, the guidance said.

There were 1,898 coronavirus cases among active-duty service members as of Thursday, according to the Pentagon. Eight people tied to the Defense Department have died after contracting the virus.

Stars and Stripes reporters Kent Harris and Nancy Montgomery contributed to this story.
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Duty: Army Corps active in fighting virus at same time river levels rise, needing attention

FROM FRONT PAGE

are good at building stuff."

With more than 35,000 civilian and military workers, the Corps oversees deactivated nuclear power plants, sets water storage rules for reservoirs, watches over levees and locks on U.S. rivers, and manages the physical cleanup of toxic superfund sites. The Corps had already started shutting down peripheral missions in early March, such as overseeing camp sites and parks. By mid-month, FEMA had given the Corps \$361 million and instructions to start planning and building hospitals in New York, California and Washington state, according to Raini Brunson, a spokeswoman for the Corps. Since then, it's begun additional projects in Huntsville, Ala., and Detroit, and has asked governors across the country to identify hotels, dormitories and convention centers that can be converted to treatment centers and stocked with medical supplies.

This is the third year in a row of dangerously high water in the river. The National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration predicted last month that more than 128 million people in 23 states are at risk of spring flooding this year, with 1.2 million likely to experience disaster-level deluges. So far this year hasn't been as bad as the last, which saw parts of the Mississippi remain above "flood stage" for a record 292 days.

As of Monday, 154 river gauges were at flood stage with another 171 near that level. Major flooding was occurring at Baton Rouge, with the Mississippi forecast to crest about 4 feet below its all-time record. Most of the other trouble spots are along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and their tributaries. Fargo, N.D., began closing roads as the Red River leapt its banks in the last week of March, but the Corps hasn't yet gotten involved.

In interviews with Bloomberg News, mayors from towns up and down the Mississippi Valley indicated that they'd been promised the same level of support from federal agencies as in previous years, including from the Army Corps of Engineers. Concerns re-

main, however, as to how they'll be able to protect local emergency workers and volunteers from the coronavirus should a flooding emergency occur.

The Corps has asked the public to respect social distancing and stay "a distance of 6 feet when interacting with our personnel," according to a statement announcing the resumption of its flood fight in Louisiana. Much of the activity involved in monitoring flood risk-patrolling lonely stretches of levee, inspecting locks and dams, checking banks for erosion-is fairly solitary, Frazier says, which will likely play into the Corps' favor.

Unlike FEMA, whose personnel go house to house checking on affected populations, the Corps can do more to keep its distance. On April 3, for instance, the Corps once again had to divert water out of the Mississippi to keep New Orleans from flooding — but that work required just a few crane operators, not a crowd of densely packed workers. Many of the other areas threatened by flood are rural and sparsely pop-



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

A soldier assembles a walker at the TCF Center in Detroit on April 6. The city's convention center was converted to accommodate an overflow of patients with the coronavirus.

ulated, which also lowers the risk of infection.

Cairo, Ill., where the Ohio River joins the Mississippi, is a key location for managing flood risk. The Ohio River is responsible for 60% of the water that eventually flows from the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, so if Cairo is in flood, then a flood is coming further south.

"We're getting another rise," Jeff Grasciel, a hydrologist with the National Weather Service's Lower Mississippi River Fore-

cast Center, says of conditions in Cairo.

Offering a ray of hope, a drier weather pattern may soon cause rain to slack off across the Midwest, giving the river time to process the current torrent of water coming down. At the same time, though, there's a chance of precipitation across Arkansas, which also drains into the Mississippi.

Grasciel isn't ready to predict whether 2020 will reach the levels of 2018 and 2019. "You never say never," he says.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Chaplains get creative to care for overseas troops

By **BYTH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Troops overseas often get calls from concerned family back home in a crisis, but the coronavirus pandemic has flipped that around with service members in Japan worrying instead about stateside loved ones, said the top chaplain at the home of U.S. Forces Japan.

"We're hearing about COVID-19 developments in the States," 374th Airlift Wing Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Dale Marlowe said during an interview Thursday inside Yokota's main chapel in western Tokyo. "People and families are worried about that."

In New York, the epicenter of the pandemic in the United States, officials reported 518 coronavirus deaths over the course of 24 hours Thursday. The city's death toll rose to 4,778, up from 4,260 the day before, although new deaths are trending down from the record 806 people who died on Tuesday, the New York Post reported.

By comparison, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government has reported 36 deaths from the virus, although the city recorded a record 181 new infections Thursday.

Service members whose loved ones become sick or die back home can request emergency

leave. However, during the pandemic troops returning to the U.S. must be quarantined for 14 days.

"Now people ask, do I need to go on a plane and have two weeks of restricted movement to be with my family?" said Marlowe, 51, of New Castle, Pa.

The commander of U.S. Forces Japan, Air Force Lt. Gen. Kevin Schneider, declared a public health emergency April 6 for U.S. military bases in and around Tokyo. That's led to more restrictions while the Navy has quarantined sailors from all over Japan at Yokota ahead of a deployment.

Religious gatherings at Yokota and many other bases have been canceled but chaplains have adjusted their schedule to make sure at least one of them is always available, Marlowe said.

The chaplains visit airmen on the front line in the battle against the virus at Yokota's hospital or at entry gates, he said. They care for troops dealing with the loneliness of quarantine or isolation.

"If it's a single person in their room, those walls get real small, real quick," he said. "That's why it is incumbent on not only the chaplain corps but also their first sergeants, unit members and friends to provide for them and even just sit outside the door and talk."

So far, Yokota hasn't seen an uptick in social problems such as

relationship issues or substance abuse, Marlowe said. Some couples, he said, might be spending a bit more time together than usual.

The chaplains collect inspirational books about relationships and children's books and deliver them to families. They're also spending more time connecting with the community on social media.

"Things have shifted from the group, in-person, mass-gathering services," he said.

Catholic masses at Yokota are now livestreamed while Protestant services are prerecorded. The services don't involve singing hymns, but they include messagings, announcements and prayers. Protestant worshippers can collect plastic single-serving communion cups to take home. Catholics have been absolved from taking communion during the pandemic, Marlowe said.

"We are doing things we have never done before and probably things we should have done years before with technology and how to connect with people outside the traditional chapel walls," Marlowe said. "I think it is going to change the way we do our ministry."

At Camp Zama in nearby Kanagawa prefecture, chaplains also livestream services. A priest performs drive-thru commu-



THORON GOBOLO/Stars and Stripes

Lt. Col. Dale Marlowe, a chaplain at Yokota Air Base in Tokyo, Thursday explains how single-serving communion cups are helping people worship during the coronavirus pandemic.

nion at the post chapel after a livestreamed mass on Sundays, according to an Army news release.

The Zama chaplains are planning a drive-in Easter celebration where attendees will park at the Camp Zama Community Club, tune their radios into FM 88.9 to hear the service and afterward receive an Easter gift bag, according to the news release.

Chaplains are being creative to serve the community, Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Donald Ehrke of U.S. Army Garrison Japan said in the release.

"If we need to do that in a way that is unique or untried, we're

willing to make a mistake and correct if we need to, but so far the community has really responded well and they've been grateful for what we've been able to offer," he said.

However, when the crisis is over it will still be important to hold religious gatherings, Marlowe said.

"There is still something about getting together with people who have common interests and priorities," he said.

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Retired Marine: This is new normal until vaccine

By **CATILIN DOORNBOS**
Stars and Stripes

A retired Marine officer who led a team that developed a pandemic contingency plan for Marines in Japan says the public should not expect a return to normal even after coronavirus loosens its grip.

In 2005, President George W. Bush tasked military leaders with developing contingency plans in preparation for an H1N1 influenza pandemic. Lt. Col. James Rualcaba, now retired, was then the lead operational planner for III Marine Expeditionary Force on Okinawa and was charged with leading efforts to develop such a plan for Marines in Japan.

Fifteen years later and facing a coronavirus pandemic, the military is using some of the ideas his team developed, such as the concept of health protection conditions as a phased response to health threats.

Rualcaba on Thursday unboxed the 650-page plan that took 20 months of research and work with colleagues and medical professionals to share lessons learned with Stars and Stripes.

What's "not being talked about

in a pandemic is that we are not getting back to normal until a vaccine or cure is developed," Rualcaba said from his home in Oceanside, Calif.

"If you recall the environment pre-9/11, we were able to go through the airports, meet our loved ones at the gates and go through terminals without TSA," he said. "Our new normal is going to be some form of restrictive measure — some form of social distancing — until the threat is eliminated."

Rualcaba's team found researchers need six to nine months after clinical confirmation of a pandemic to develop a vaccine. The World Health Organization declared the new coronavirus a pandemic on March 11, meaning a vaccine may not be ready before December.

During a virtual town hall April 6 on the Air Force's Facebook page, Chief of Staff Gen. David

Goldfein said predictive models he consults indicate the coronavirus infection rate won't begin to level out until this summer.

"I think we're about to have a couple of our toughest weeks here in the country," he said. "June seems to be about where we're going to level, and then July and August look to be — potentially — recovery months."

As of Thursday, 461,437 Americans had tested positive for coronavirus, up from about 260 a month before, according to Johns Hopkins University's coronavirus research center.

However, the desire to return to normal is strong and comes from the top. President Donald Trump at a Fox News town hall on March 24 said he wanted the country "opened up and just raring to go by Easter."

The president stepped back from that statement at a press conference Tuesday and said social distancing will be necessary "for a while."

"At some point, that's going away. We'll be able to sit next to each other like we have all our lives," Trump said. "People want to sit next to each other at restaurants. They want to sit next to



Rualcaba

each other like normal at a football game, baseball game, basketball game, hockey game. We want to go back to life."

Still, the president said, the U.S. is "getting much closer to getting our country back to the way it was."

Leaders should prepare the public to expect a return to normal according to a science-based timeline rather than relying on "unfounded messages of hope," Rualcaba said.

"We should look to science- and condition-based assessments to decide when to ease or lift the restrictive measures," he said.

Helping the public accept the long-term nature of the crisis is not meant to trigger thoughts of a "doomsday," Rualcaba said, but rather to educate them to "better prepare and cope with what's to come."

"We are in a new paradigm; we have to be accepting these changes," Rualcaba said. "I think that's a message of hope to say we can adapt. We are resilient; we just have to do our part to help contain this."

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

World's militaries face a new enemy

By TIA GOLDENBERG
AND ISABEL DEBBE
Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — The coronavirus pandemic has forced militaries and militias to adapt to an invisible enemy, even as traditional conflicts grind on.

Armies have had to enforce social distancing rules among troops while helping with national outbreak containment and postponing maneuvers.

On Thursday, Saudi Arabia declared a temporary halt to fighting in Yemen because of the pandemic, while in Libya and Afghanistan conflicts are intensifying despite U.N. appeals for a global cease-fire. An outbreak in poor or war-scarred nations would be particularly devastating.

Here is a look at how the outbreak affects some militaries and conflicts:

Defending borders

Before the pandemic, Israel's military kept tabs on the Iran-backed Hezbollah militia in Lebanon, carried out occasional air strikes against Iran's military presence in Syria and retaliated for sporadic rocket fire from the Gaza Strip.

Now troops are being mobilized to help police enforce quarantines, assist the elderly or provide child care for health workers.

The conflicts on Israel's frontiers persist. In late March, Syrian air defenses opened fire on missiles allegedly launched from Israeli warplanes.

The Israeli military said border

defense remains its top priority.

"Our enemies are still at our borders and our civilians are still within sniper or anti-tank missile range," said Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus, a military spokesman.

Bridging divides?

The virus has spread to the Israeli-occupied West Bank and to Gaza, which has been blockaded by Israel and Egypt since the militant Hamas group seized control in 2007.

The long-simmering Israeli-Palestinian conflict now exists side-by-side with efforts to contain the outbreak.

But the virus is also opening doors to limited cooperation. Israel has helped deliver test kits and other supplies to both the West Bank and Gaza. An Israeli-Palestinian committee is coordinating the movement of Palestinian workers and security forces in the West Bank.

Wage war or fight virus

Spurred by concern over the pandemic, the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen declared a temporary cease-fire after five years of war. The Houthis have dismissed the offer as a ploy and clashes continue, casting doubt over a future peace agreement.

The U.N. had called for an end to escalating fighting so authorities can confront the coronavirus. Yemen confirmed its first case last week, while foreign backers Iran and Saudi Arabia have struggled to stem massive outbreaks. An outbreak in Yemen,



HANI MAHOMMED/AP

Houthi rebel fighters display their weapons Feb. 20 during a gathering aimed at mobilizing more fighters for the Iranian-backed Houthi movement, in Sanaa, Yemen. The world's militaries have had to adapt to coronavirus even as traditional conflicts go on.

where the conflict has devastated the health care system, could be catastrophic.

Eastern-based forces under the command of Khalifa Hifter are escalating a year-long siege of the capital, Tripoli, which they want to wrest from the U.N.-backed government.

Artillery shells crashed through living rooms, cars, a sea port and three hospitals over the last month, killing at least 16 civilians and wounding more than 30. Grad rockets struck one of the country's few coronavirus facilities. Militias allied with the Tripoli government have expanded their use of Turkish drones, at one point attacking an aircraft allegedly carrying medical supplies and protective gear.

Balancing threats

In South Korea, which has managed to slow the outbreak, the military is key to containment.

More than 450 military medical staff and 2,700 troops have been deployed to help with treatment at hospitals, screening travelers, enforcing quarantine, producing face masks and helping trace the contacts of virus carriers, according to the Defense Ministry.

While the country is under constant threat from its nuclear-armed rival North Korea, experts say the cutback in training is inevitable. An outbreak among troops would be devastating for combat readiness.

Waging war games

For the 30 member nations of the NATO military alliance, which isn't fighting any wars, the virus poses a challenge to its routine training exercises.

Last month, the U.S. Army announced that it was cutting down the number of troops taking part in massive war games, the Defender-Europe 2020 exercises,

that have been planned across Europe over the next six months.

The NATO chief, Jens Stoltenberg, said the alliance remains ready to act.

Unseen disaster

India has ordered its 1.3 billion people into lockdown, but tensions remain on its militarized frontier with Pakistan. In March, soldiers exchanged gunfire and mortar shells along the frontier at least two dozen times, according to the Indian army.

The military has stopped recruitment and halted movement across military stations except for essential services.

Lt. Gen. Vinod Bhatia, who heads India's Defense Ministry-run think tank the Center for Joint Warfare Studies, said that "all militaries build scenarios, but there hasn't been a scenario around this kind of disaster."

Some troops will get priority once military moves restart

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Priority for military moves will go to personnel with hardships and essential positions once the Defense Department's travel restrictions are lifted, the military's senior enlisted adviser said Friday.

"Every single service right now is developing plans of actions to make sure that we properly prioritize and move people," Chief Master Sgt. Ramon Colon-Lopez, the senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Friday during a Facebook town hall.

The two 60-day, stop-movement orders put in place by Defense Secretary Mark Esper in March halted military moves and nonessential travel for service members, their families and other Defense Department personnel due to the worldwide coronavirus outbreak. The travel restriction order for the United States ends May 11 and the one for overseas



KAREN A. IWANOTO/U.S. Army

First Lt. Kathryn Bailey supervises the delivery and unpacking of her household items in 2017 on Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii. Troops with essential positions or hardships will get priority when the military restarts moves.

travel ends May 23.

The stop-movement orders have affected thousands of families who were preparing to move. Stories about military families who had already shipped their

household goods or had signed contracts for a home at their new duty station have highlighted the unanticipated financial strains on service members.

The travel restrictions have

created a backlog of moves just before the start of the busy military moving season, when most moves occur between May and August. Prioritizing personnel will be needed because of the limited capacity to handle all of the anticipated moves, Colon-Lopez said.

"People who are without their property is also a factor that we are going to place in there. People in positions of responsibility — mission-essential personnel — are going to be part of that equation," he said of some of the priorities being considered by the services.

Colon-Lopez asked personnel to continue speaking to their chain of command so they know who is facing hardships and what needs to be done to help them.

If the initial stop-movement orders are extended, he said the military services will determine on a case-by-case basis which people will be allowed to move, including ones with "a dire need" and troops who need to return from deployment.

"[The coronavirus] gets a vote. And until we get to see the spread of the disease peak and start coming down on the downward spiral of risk for infection, we need to maintain the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] guidelines in place. And that includes prevention of movement of certain people," Colon-Lopez said.

The plan for how the military will deal with an extension on the stop-movement orders is pending approval from Esper and should be released in a few weeks, he said.

The pandemic is "unprecedented" and personnel should expect a "new normal," Colon-Lopez said. "There's going to be a lot of changes to procedures and the way that we used to do things, from grocery shopping to the way that we interact with people... the way that we conduct training for that matter."

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

US death toll overtakes Italy; Midwest braces

Associated Press

CHICAGO — The U.S. death toll from the coronavirus eclipsed Italy's for the highest in the world, surpassing 20,000, as Chicago and other cities across the Midwest braced for a potential surge in victims and moved to snuff out smoldering hot spots of contagion before they erupt.

With the New York area still deep in crisis, fear mounted over the spread of the scourge into the nation's heartland.

Twenty-four residents of an Indiana nursing home hit by COVID-19 have died, while a nursing home in Iowa saw 14 deaths. Chicago's Cook County has set up a temporary morgue that can take more than 2,000 bodies. And Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot has been going around telling groups of people to "break it up."

The outbreak's center of gravity has shifted from China to Europe and the United States, which now has by far the largest number of confirmed cases — over a half-million — and a death toll higher than Italy's count of nearly 19,500, according to the tally kept by Johns Hopkins University.

The death rate — the number of dead relative to the population — is still far higher in Italy than in the United States, which has more than five times as many people. And worldwide, the true numbers of dead and infected are believed to be much higher because of testing shortages, different counting practices and concealment by some governments.

About half the deaths in the U.S. are in the New York metropolitan area, where hospitalizations are nevertheless slowing and other indicators suggest lockdowns and social distancing are "flattening the curve" of infections and staving off the doomsday scenarios of just a week or two ago.

New York state on Saturday reported 783 more deaths, for a total of over 8,600. Gov. Andrew Cuomo said the daily number of deaths is stabilizing, "but stabilizing at a horrific rate."

"What do we do now? We stay the course," said Cuomo, who like other leaders has warned that relaxing restrictions too soon could enable the virus to come back with a vengeance.

With authorities warning that the crisis in New York is far from



NAM Y. HUN/AP

A man and child wearing protective masks pass the encouraging message "Chicago Stay Strong," chalked outside of a Roscoe Village neighborhood pub by artist Heather Gentile Collins, on Saturday. In the Midwest, pockets of COVID-19 contagion have led to stricter enforcement of restrictions.

over, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that the city's 1.1 million-student school system will remain closed for the rest of the academic year. But Cuomo said the decision is up to him, and no such determination has been made.

In the Midwest, pockets of contagion have alarmed state and city leaders and led to stricter enforcement.

Nearly 300 inmates at the Cook County Jail have tested positive for the virus, and two have died. In Wisconsin, health officials expect to see an increase in cases after thousands of people went to

the polls Tuesday for the state's presidential primary.

Michigan's governor extended a stay-at-home order with new provisions: People with multiple homes may no longer travel between them.

In Kansas, the state Supreme Court heard arguments in a dispute Saturday between Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly and Republican lawmakers who overturned her executive order banning religious services and funerals with more than 10 people. New Mexico's governor expanded a ban on mass gatherings to include churches and other

houses of worship.

An AP tally from media reports and state health departments indicates at least 2,500 deaths have been linked to coronavirus in nursing homes and long-term care facilities across the United States, though the federal government has not been releasing a count of its own.

The Internal Revenue Service said the first economic support payments from a \$2.2 trillion rescue package have been deposited in taxpayers' bank accounts, but it didn't say how many people received them or how much money has been disbursed so far.



ERIC RISBERG/AP

George Webber, dressed as "The Count" Agoston Haraszthy, leads a virtual online tasting and tour of the historic Buena Vista Winery in Sonoma, Calif.

Wineries offer virtual tasting and tours

By ERIC RISBERG

Associated Press

SONOMA, Calif. — In stark contrast to the normal hustle and bustle of tourists and enophiles, the grounds sit empty at California's oldest commercial winery — the historic Buena Vista.

Tasting rooms statewide shut down last month after the governor ordered businesses to close to slow the spread of the new coronavirus. So Buena Vista and other wineries that want to stay viable and connected to their customers during the pandemic are harnessing technology and platforms such as Facebook Live to offer virtual wine experiences.

Actor George Webber, dressed in period clothing as "The Count" Agoston Haraszthy — the founder of Buena Vista in

1857 — takes online viewers back in time, broadcasting several days a week inside the oldest wine cave dug in the state and offering a "virtual tasting."

Among the many other wineries doing online experiences are Clos du Val, Far Niente, Groth, St. Supery, Kendall-Jackson, Quintessa, Plumpjack, Wente and Bouchaine Vineyards.

At Bouchaine, a premier producer of estate chardonnay and pinot noir in Napa's Carneros region, a virtual online experience that had been in the planning for months was launched in mid-March at a crucial time. Those who want to take part in the tasting program order a winemaker tasting kit, which is delivered to their home. Bouchaine's host leads the virtual tasting with a view of scenic rolling vineyards in the background.

Taking part in one of the first hourlong wine tastings last month were Don and Mardel Overly, who were self-quarantined in their home near Reno, Nev.

"Participating in this virtual wine tasting has been a great distraction, and I really enjoy it. It's super creative," Mardel said.

Bouchaine also just added another virtual experience inviting top Napa Valley and California chefs to come into the kitchen at the winery's new visitor center to share their skills and recipes with online guests.

"This is a fantastic way to connect with our fans, to check in on our club members," said Bouchaine winemaker and general manager Chris Kajani. "To share a smile, share a glass of wine and recognize that we are all here for each other and add a little bit of levity to the day."

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Tax-paying immigrants left out of stimulus plan

By ASTRID GALVAN,
PHILIP MARCELO
AND CLAUDIA TORRENS
Associated Press

PHOENIX — The \$2.2 trillion package that Congress approved to offer financial help during the coronavirus pandemic has one major exclusion: millions of immigrants who do not have legal status in the U.S. but work here and pay taxes.

That includes Carmen Contreras Lopez, a 48-year-old housekeeper who, though she earns low wages, files a tax return each year. Since the virus took hold, she has lost most of her clients and is getting by with help from her oldest son. But she won't see a penny of the money promised to most Americans in response to the pandemic.

"It's hard because to the government, we don't exist," said Contreras Lopez, who has lived in the U.S. for 30 years and has four grown children who are U.S. citizens.

The government expects to begin making payments to millions of Americans in mid-April. Anyone earning up to \$75,000 in adjusted gross income and who has a Social Security number will receive \$1,200. The payment steadily declines for those who make more. Legal permanent residents, or green card holders, are expected to benefit.

Roughly 4.3 million mostly unauthorized immigrants who do not have a Social Security number file taxes using what's known

as a taxpayer identification number, according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.

Many say they pay federal taxes because they hope it will one day help them achieve legal residency and because they feel it's the right thing to do.

"We made that decision because we're living in a country that's welcomed us with a lot of love," said Ingrid Vaca, a house cleaner in the Washington area.

Vaca said immigrants take care of communities, children, the elderly and homes, but they will not receive any help themselves. Also left out are the workers' 3.5 million children, many of whom are American citizens.

Asked how immigrants without legal status will survive the pandemic's economic toll without any aid, President Donald Trump acknowledged the difficulty but said many citizens without work need help first.

"It's a really sad situation, and we are working on it. I will tell you I'm not going to give you a hard and fast answer because I just want to tell you it's something I think about," Trump said.

Democratic lawmakers introduced legislation in the House and Senate that would allow immigrants to access relief funds.

"COVID-19 does not care about your immigration status, so neither should our response," U.S. Rep. Raul M. Grijalva, an Arizona Democrat, said in a statement.

Maria Zamorano, a day laborer in the Los Angeles area, has also



Maria Zamorano poses for portrait March 31 inside of a job placement center in Pasadena, Calif. Many immigrants who work and pay taxes, but do not have legal status, in the U.S. will be left out of Congress' stimulus package.

been left without work. Until recently, she worked seven days a week cleaning houses, earning roughly \$700 weekly. But all of her employers canceled services. After she did an interview with The New York Times about her situation, two of those employers decided to keep paying her, she said, but she doesn't know for how long. She's still short on cash for food, rent and bills.

"Like thousands of others who don't have legal status, we are left empty-handed in this crisis,"

Zamorano said. "I pay taxes, but the government doesn't consider that we should get help."

In rural Massachusetts, Jose Martinez said a pandemic stimulus check could have helped cover at least a month's worth of expenses, if he had qualified. The 34-year-old Mexican crossed the border illegally about 15 years ago and lives near the Vermont state line with his 4-year-old American-born daughter.

Martinez, a house painter, says work has dropped off during the

pandemic. His boss still owes him more than \$500 for recent jobs, and the restaurant where he washes dishes part-time has also been temporarily shuttered.

"The check would have given me the opportunity to stay at home, avoid sickness and keep my family safe," Martinez said, referring to the stimulus money. "But I have to keep looking for work and exposing us to risk. I don't know what else to do."

Road funding in peril as stay-at-home orders affect traffic

By DAVID A. LIEB
Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — America's roads are a lot less congested, due to coronavirus shutdowns that have kept millions of commuters, shoppers and vacationers parked at their homes.

While that makes it easier to patch potholes, it also could spell trouble for road and bridge projects. The longer motorists remain off the roads, the harder it will be for states to afford repairs in the months and years ahead.

Reduced traffic volumes are expected to cause a sharp drop in state revenue from fuel taxes, tolls and other user fees that could force delays for thousands of projects nationwide unless the federal government intervenes.

"This is a critical need at the national level," said Patrick McKenna, president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, a director of Missouri's transportation department.

A \$2 trillion federal stimulus package enacted last month included billions for public transit systems, publicly owned commercial airports and Amtrak passenger train service — all of which have seen sharp declines in customers as a result of the coronavirus



A car drives past a roadwork construction project in Seattle where ramps off the Highway 520 floating bridge meet Montlake Boulevard. The project has been shut down because of concern over the spread of the coronavirus.

rus. But it earmarked nothing for state highways and bridges.

Republican President Donald Trump and Democratic House leaders have expressed support for a big infrastructure spending plan as part of another economic stimulus bill. But similar pronouncements in previous years have failed to produce results.

In the meantime, some road

and bridge projects already have been put on hold.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation has slashed its expected construction projects from 131 down to 38 for the upcoming budget year, a \$2 billion reduction.

Ohio has delayed projects until next year on interstate highways in Columbus and Cincinnati be-

cause of the expected decline in fuel tax revenue.

Faced with a budget shortfall, Missouri has postponed \$46 million for 18 road and bridge projects that had been priorities for local governments. As many as 299 additional projects valued at \$785 million could be at risk without federal help, McKenna said.

The city of Bend, Ore., pulled a \$190 million transportation bond off the May ballot. Supporters had concerns about pushing a property tax hike for roads, sidewalks and bike lanes while local businesses are suffering financially and many residents are without work.

"They're going to show up on voters' day and just glance and think, 'I'm not raising my taxes right now, no way!'" said Mike Riley, co-chairman of the Go Bend 2020 Coalition that supported the measure. "We're going to come back to voters, but now just felt like the wrong time."

Most states have classified road construction as essential work that can continue despite orders shutting down certain businesses. But some states have not.

Washington state, site of the first coronavirus outbreak in the U.S., suspended work on 92 of its 100 active highway projects as a result of a stay-at-home order for

most workers. The halted projects include major ones in Seattle and Spokane, as well as improvements to an Interstate 90 pass through an avalanche-prone area of the Cascade Mountains.

Vermont's entire \$200 million road construction plan for 2020 is on hold, save for a \$6 million emergency repair where a storm washed out part of the foundation on Interstate 89.

By contrast, some states have taken advantage of a lull in traffic to speed up transportation projects. Construction crews have been able to shut down highway lanes during prime hours without causing major traffic backups.

Florida announced that it is accelerating work schedules by several weeks on about \$2 billion worth of bridge and road projects.

In Maryland, a westbound lane of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge near Annapolis recently reopened to vehicles following repairs. The \$27 million project was completed well ahead of schedule, partly because of light traffic amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The declining traffic volumes have been especially large in some of the nation's most famously congested metropolitan areas, such as the San Francisco Bay area.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Fears of 'Wild West' as blood tests released

By MATTHEW PERRONE

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Blood tests for the coronavirus could play a key role in deciding whether millions of Americans can safely return to work and school. But public health officials warn that the current "Wild West" of unregulated tests is creating confusion that could ultimately slow the path to recovery.

More than 70 companies have signed up to sell so-called antibody tests in recent weeks, according to U.S. regulators. Governments around the world hope that the rapid tests, which typically use a finger-prick of blood on a test strip, could soon ease public restrictions by identifying people who have previously had the virus and have developed some immunity to it.

But key questions remain: How accurate are the tests, how much protection is needed and how long will that protection last?

The blood tests are different from the nasal swab-based tests currently used to diagnose active COVID-19 infections. Instead, the tests look for blood proteins called antibodies, which the body produces days or weeks after fighting an infection. The same approach is used for HIV, hepatitis, Lyme disease, lupus and many other diseases.

Because of the relative simplicity of the technology, the Food and Drug Administration decided to waive initial review of the tests as part of its emergency response to the coronavirus outbreak.



JENS MEYER/AP

A scientist presents an antibody test for coronavirus in a laboratory of the Leibniz Institute of Photonic Technology at the InfecToGnostics research campus in Jena, Germany, on April 3.

Right now, the tests are most useful for researchers studying how the virus has spread through the U.S. population. The government said Friday it has started testing 10,000 volunteers. The White House has not outlined a broader plan for testing and how the results might be used.

With almost no FDA oversight of the tests, "It really has created a mess that's going to take a while

to clean up," said Eric Blank of the Association for Public Health Laboratories. "In the meantime, you've got a lot of companies marketing a lot of stuff and nobody has any idea of how good it is."

Members of Blank's group, which represent state and local lab officials, have urged the FDA to revisit its lax approach toward the tests. That approach essentially allows companies to

launch as long as they notify the agency and include disclaimers. Companies are supposed to state that their tests have not been FDA-approved and cannot rule out whether someone is currently infected.

Last week, FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn said in a statement that the agency will "take appropriate action" against companies making false claims or selling in-

accurate tests.

Dr. Allison Rakeman of New York City's Public Health Laboratory says some local hospitals are assuming the tests, which are listed on FDA's website, "have been vetted, when they have not."

The danger of faulty testing, Rakeman says, is that people will mistakenly conclude that they are immune or are no longer spreading the virus.

"Then somebody goes home and kisses their 90-year-old grandmother," said Rakeman. "You don't want to give someone a false sense of security."

For many infections, antibody levels above a certain threshold indicate that the person's immune system has successfully fought off the virus and is likely protected from reinfection. For COVID-19, it's not yet clear what level of antibodies render patients immune or how long immunity might last.

Adding to the confusion is the fact that both legitimate companies and fraudulent operators appear to be selling the kits. Distinguishing between the two can be a challenge.

Officials in Laredo, Texas, reported this month that some 2,500 antibody tests set for use at a local drive-thru testing site were likely frauds. City officials had ordered what they were told were "FDA-approved COVID-19 rapid tests," from a local clinic. But when they checked the test's accuracy, it fell well below the range promised, the city said in a statement.

'Absolute chaos' as small businesses try to apply for rescue funds, loans

By JOYCE M. ROSENBERG

AND KEN SWEET

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Desperate small-business owners who hoped for a quick government lifeline to help them survive the coronavirus crisis are still without funds, instead battling red tape, wary banks and swamped computer systems.

Thousands of owners who applied for loans under the government's Paycheck Protection Program are in their second week of waiting for their money.

And thousands who sought relief through Small Business Administration economic injury disaster loans have waited even longer — some since mid-March.

A few have gotten money. But a panoply of issues at the SBA and banks have far more wondering if they'll be able to stay in business — they've been forced to close their doors due to social-distancing regulations or because customers have cut back their spending.

Those in limbo include owners hoping to avoid layoffs.

The cancellation of weddings,

parties and other events forced caterer Leslie Nilsson to lay off half her staff of 10, but her kitchen staffers are still working, preparing 500 meals a day for New York health care workers.

"If I don't get this money, I don't know how I'm going to pay them past these next two weeks," said Nilsson, owner of Bartleby & Sage. She has applied for a loan under the \$349 billion Paycheck Protection Program. She's also hoping to get her administrative staff back to work.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin raised expectations of nearly immediate cash when, in announcing the Paycheck Protection Program, he said companies could receive their loan money the same day they apply.

But Mnuchin's forecast didn't factor in technological glitches, including problems with the SBA's E-Tran processing system on Monday. It also overestimated the ability of the banks to turn around the massive number of applications they were receiving.

Since April 3, when the program began, more than 791,000 applications have been approved by the SBA. In 2019, it handled

under 60,000.

Bankers say they knew going into the program that there would be a tsunami of applications. But even those expectations were blown out of the water — Huntington Bank, the largest SBA lender by volume, had 16,000 applications the first weekend. The bank handled SBA 36,000 applications in all of 2019.

A smaller bank, Washington Trust Bank, located in the Pacific Northwest, received 1,900 applications the first week, 20 times the number of applications it handled last year.

"It's been absolute chaos, and we haven't even gotten to the point where the program is fully open yet," said Jack Heath, president of Washington Trust. Heath said there were still another 600 applications waiting to be processed.

Banks' requirements also frustrated owners. Many banks required applicants to have an existing relationship with the bank, for example, a business checking account, credit card and line of credit. Long-time customers with only one or two accounts found themselves needing to apply elsewhere.



DAVID GOLDMAN/AP

The dining section is closed off, March 25, at East Side Pockets, a small restaurant near Brown University, in Providence, R.I. Small-business owners looking to collect rescue funds from a government lifeline have stumbled upon many roadblocks.

One week in, fewer than a quarter of the banks have actually funded the loans and sent money to businesses, said an executive at a bank industry group, who declined to be identified in order to discuss the details of the program.

While some banks were slow to get the necessary infrastructure up and running to accept applications, the problems were further compounded by technological issues at the SBA, bankers said.

It is taking more than an hour to submit each application to the SBA, the industry group executive said.

"These systems are not built for massive volumes," said Karen Kerrigan, president of the Advocacy group Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council.

Furthermore, not every bank could use the SBA's E-Tran system, leaving many community banks unable to help their clients.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Easter observed in distance; new hot spots bloom

—BY GEIR MOULSON
AND JOSEPH WILSON
Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain — The world celebrated Easter at a distance on Sunday, with most churches closed and family gatherings canceled amid wide-ranging coronavirus shutdowns. Huge uncertainties loomed about not just the next few weeks but the months ahead as a top European Union official suggested people hold off on making any summer vacation plans.

Southern Europe and the United States, whose death toll of over 20,600 is now the world's highest, have been the recent focal points of the pandemic. But coronavirus hot spots have been shifting constantly and new concerns are rising in Japan, Turkey, the U.S. Midwest and Britain, where the death toll on Sunday was expected to surpass 10,000.

St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, where tens of thousands would normally gather to hear Pope Francis deliver his "Urbi et Orbi" speech and blessing "to the city and the world," was empty of crowds and flowers Sunday, ringed by police barricades. Pope Francis celebrated Easter Mass inside the largely empty basilica, with the faithful watching on TV at home.

Similar scenes played out around the world. Some South Korean churches held Easter services online while Catholic bishops in New Zealand wrote a special pastoral letter to worshippers stuck at home.

In Europe, countries used roadblocks, fines and other tactics to keep people from traveling over an Easter weekend with beautiful spring weather. As hard-hit countries like Italy and Spain see reduced daily infections with and deaths from the virus, economic pressures are mounting to loosen the tight restrictions on daily life put in to fight off the pandemic.

Germany's president told his compatriots in a rare televised address: "Every one of you has changed his life radically; every one of you has saved human lives in doing so and is saving more every day."

When and how weeks-old restrictions are loosened is something that "all of us have ... in our hands, with our patience and our discipline," Frank-Walter Steinmeier said.

Some European nations are starting tentative moves to ease their shutdowns. Spain, which on Sunday reported its lowest daily growth in infections in three weeks, will allow workers in some nonessential industries to return Monday to factories and



ANDREAS SOLARO, POOL/AP

Pope Francis spreads incense at the start of Easter Sunday Mass, inside an empty St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, on Sunday.

construction sites.

But much uncertainty remains. Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said in an open letter to Austrians that the virus will "be with us for months yet."

And asked by Germany's Bild am Sonntag newspaper whether people should book summer holidays now, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen replied: "I would advise waiting with such plans."

"No one can make reliable forecasts for July and August at the moment," she said.

Restaurants and bars already are missing out on holiday business.

"Sales are zero and we have a series of expenses: rent, stock, and we have even had to increase spending with security personnel

to prevent robberies," said Pablo Gonzalo, a bar manager in the southern Spanish city of Malaga.

In his Easter address, the pope called for solidarity across Europe and the world to confront the "epochal challenge" posed by the pandemic. Pope Francis urged political leaders, in particular, to give hope and opportunity to those laid-off by the millions.

"This is not a time for self-centeredness, because the challenge we are facing is shared by all, without distinguishing between persons," he said.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. But for others, especially older people and the infirm, it can cause severe symptoms and lead to death.

UK's PM Johnson out of the hospital

LONDON — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was discharged from a hospital Sunday where he was treated in intensive care for the coronavirus.

Johnson's office says he left St. Thomas' Hospital in London and will continue to recover at Chequers, the prime minister's country house. He will not immediately return to work. Johnson had been in the hospital for a week and spent three nights in the ICU.

From The Associated Press

Israel tightens quarantine in Jerusalem to halt spread

By ILAN BEN ZION
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — The Israeli government approved a tight quarantine of several areas of Jerusalem on Sunday, including the historic Old City, in a bid to slow the spread of the coronavirus in the city's most susceptible neighborhoods.

A ministerial committee approved the shutting down of movement in and out of several predominantly ultra-Orthodox areas of the city in order to contain the disease that has already resulted in over 100 deaths in Israel and almost 6,000 around the Middle East, about three-quarters of which come from Iran.

The measure, which takes effect at noon on Sunday but had been debated for days, faced resistance from ultra-Orthodox ministers in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government who rejected singling out their community.

Israel's Health Ministry has documented over 10,000 cases of



SEBASTIAN SCHEINER, POOL/AP

A clergyman waits for the Easter Sunday Mass at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, believed by many Christians to be the site of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus Christ, in Jerusalem's old city, Sunday.

the coronavirus. Roughly a fifth of all cases in Israel are in Jerusalem, the ministry said. A large percentage of the COVID-19 cases are in the country's largely insular ultra-Orthodox communi-

ty, which for weeks did not adhere to government orders to maintain social distancing.

Starting Sunday, residents of four areas of Jerusalem would not be permitted to leave their neigh-

borhoods for provisioning, and could only move to other areas for essential work and medical care.

Already tight restrictions on public gatherings have limited religious events in Jerusalem this April, which features the Jewish holiday of Passover, the Christian holiday of Easter and the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

At Jerusalem's Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray, a limited quorum of some 10 men gathered to perform the Priestly Benediction, the customary prayer held during the week-long holiday of Passover. The blessing normally draws tens of thousands of worshippers, but due to coronavirus restrictions, there were only a handful in the large plaza adjacent to the wall. Among those participating in the prayer was U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman.

At the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where many Christians believe Jesus was crucified and entombed, the top Roman Catholic cleric in the Holy Land Arch-

bishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa held Easter Mass before a largely empty church.

"My message is that despite the sign of death and fear that we are seeing everywhere all over the world we have to look at the good all those that are giving their lives for the others," he said. "The message of Easter is that life, despite all, will prevail."

In neighboring Egypt and Lebanon, near-empty Easter ceremonies took place as well.

Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates warned it may implement a "quota" system in some countries refusing to take back their citizens who are no longer working in the Arabian Peninsula nation. A statement carried by the state-run WAM news agency did not name any countries, but the threat appeared to target Asian nations from which many of the UAE's laborers come. The UAE is home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, where its vital real-estate and tourism sectors have collapsed amid the pandemic.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Americans howl to thank health care workers

BY DAVID ZALUBOWSKI
AND JAMES ANDERSON
Associated Press

DENVER — It starts with a few people letting loose with some tentative yelps. Then neighbors emerge from their homes and join, forming a rolling chorus of howls and screams that pierces the twilight to end another day's monotonous forced isolation.

From California to Colorado to Georgia and upstate New York, Americans are taking a moment each night at 8 to howl in a quickly spreading ritual that has become a wrenching response of a society cut off from one another by the coronavirus pandemic.

They howl to thank the nation's health care workers and first responders for their selfless sacrifices, much like the balcony applause and singing in Italy and Spain. Others do it to reduce their pain, isolation and frustration.

In Colorado, Gov. Jared Polis has encouraged residents to participate. Children who miss their classmates and backyard dogs join in, their own yows punctuated by occasional firework, horn blowing and bell ringing.

There's something very Western about howling that's resonating in Colorado — the call-and-response aspect of it. Most people try it and love to hear the howl in return," said Brice Maiuro, a poet, storyteller and activist who works at American Jewish Health.

The nightly howl is a primal affirmation that provides a moment's bright spot each evening



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Brice Maiuro, Shelsea Ochoa and Anna Beazer participate in a group howl in Cheesman Park in Denver on Wednesday to thank the health care workers and first responders who are fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

by declaring, collectively: We shall prevail, said Dr. Scott Cybers, director of Stress and Anxiety programs at the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Depression Center at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. It's a way to take back some of the control that the pandemic-forced social isolation has forced everyone to give up, he said.

"The virus' impact is very different for everyone, and this is a way to say, 'This sucks,' and get it out in a loud way," Cybers said. "Just being able to scream and shout and let out pent-up grief

and loss is important. Little kids, on the other hand, are really enjoying this."

Maiuro and his partner, Shelsea Ochoa, a street activist and artist, formed the Facebook group Go Outside and Howl at 8 p.m. The group has nearly half a million members from all 50 states and 99 countries since they created it as Colorado's shelter-in-place order went into effect last month.

"We wanted to do this mostly because people are feeling isolated right now," said Ochoa, 33, who works at the Denver Museum

of Nature & Science. "I think it hit on something others needed."

Why howling?

In California, friends and family of Ochoa's would howl at sunset; in Brazil, where she lived recently, residents would cheer at sunset.

Maiuro said that he and fellow poets used to howl at the moon during back-alley poetry readings in Boulder.

"There's no wrong way to do it," said Ochoa. "People can subscribe any kind of meaning they want to it."

Health care workers are grate-

ful for the support — and the nightly moment's relief from the stresses of their work.

"It not only inspires me with a sense of solidarity and appreciation, but it makes me laugh a little each day," Jerrod Milton, a provider and senior vice president of operations at Children's Hospital Colorado, said. "I cannot tell the difference between the howls coming from fellow humans and those instinctively coming alongside from our canine neighborhood companions."

Distillery churns hand sanitizer for first responders

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii

The coronavirus pandemic has brought many small businesses to a standstill, but Ko'olau Distillery on Oahu has never been busier.

However, founders Eric Dill and Ian Brooks are not producing their signature Old Pali Road Whiskey.

Instead, they have rejiggered the distilling process for the time being to make only "neutral" grain alcohol — concentrated at 95% by volume — to produce free hand sanitizer that has been in short supply in Hawaii with the onset of the coronavirus epidemic.

They limit distribution to key medical and civil service personnel in the state.

They use a formula recommended by the World Health Organization, which calls for a mix of alcohol, hydrogen peroxide and a moisturizing agent, in this case, glycerol.

Normally, the distillery's two stills operate a couple days a week for six to eight hours on each run, Dill said. In this race to produce hand sanitizer, however, they've been running most days from early morning to midnight,



Ko'olau Distillery

Eric Dill prepares hand sanitizer at Ko'olau Distillery on the Hawaiian island of Oahu to fill a need during the coronavirus pandemic.

he said.

They average about 5 gallons of base alcohol a day for the hand sanitizer.

They use essentially the same process used for distilling alcohol for whiskey, the primary differences being the fermenting of sugarcane, not corn, with yeast and the much higher concentration of alcohol in the final product.

Dill, a retired Marine Corps lieutenant colonel, said the small

distillery has been met with a stampede of requests for the ad hoc hand sanitizer since gearing up for production weeks ago after the disinfectant became a rare commodity in Hawaii.

"Overwhelming, overwhelming," he said during a phone interview Monday. "I bet we get ... well, the phone starts at about 7 in the morning, and I'm here until between 10 and midnight, and the phone stops ringing about 6 p.m.

I'd say there's a call every 10 to 15 minutes. And that doesn't count all the emails we get. That's what we didn't understand going into this. We thought we were going to be just helping some first responders."

Within the first 24 hours they were inundated by desperate requests from clinics and small hospitals.

"We now have a daily meeting with our list of all the requests from the day before, and we allocate based on the amount that we have," Dill said.

The distillery's website directs visitors to fill out a request form for sanitizer. It also asks for donations of new or used 2-ounce or 4-ounce spray bottles, hydrogen peroxide, glycerol and gallon jugs bags.

Dill and Brooks, who is nearing retirement as base magistrate at nearby Marine Corps Base Hawaii, provide the hand sanitizer free of charge to the state's first responders, "essential" health care workers and civil service providers.

Dill described that third category as the people "that literally are keeping the lights on and the water running."

"Ian and I have both seen soci-

eties where those basic services have disappeared, and we've seen what happens in those places," he said.

Both have military experience in crisis response.

"I was on the Marine expeditionary unit that was out when 9/11 happened," Dill said. He said he was also lead planner for the U.S. military's humanitarian relief response in the Philippines after super Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Southeast Asian country in 2013.

Why curtail a gainful whiskey operation to hand out free hand sanitizer?

"I think the biggest thing was we knew there was a need," Dill said. "It takes a federally issued distillery license to produce alcohol legally. So, we knew there was a need, and we knew we had the capability and the capacity to help with that need. It was a tough decision to say we're gonna put on hold the thing that makes us money. But Ian and I have said multiple times, it just kind of seemed natural because as Marines, it's kind of what you do. If there's a problem, you try to help."

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Split families deal with custody amid isolation

By Amy Taxin
Associated Press

As the country hunkered down to fend off the coronavirus, Carolina McAuley expected her middle-school-age kids would continue to shuffle between her house and her ex-husband's — until she got sick.

Suddenly, her long-standing custody arrangement unraveled as she came down with a fever and chills and lost her senses of taste and smell — all presumed symptoms of the coronavirus.

Her 12- and 13-year-olds couldn't go to their father's house, lest they spread the illness further. So the parents agreed the kids would have the run of her house while she holed up in a room, and he would drop off deliveries and talk to them over FaceTime.

"Of course he wants to see his children, but he understands the point of this is not to be spreading this stuff back and forth," said McAuley, of New Jersey's Bergen County.

The coronavirus is upending divorced families' custody arrangements as parents get sick or exposed to the illness. In other cases, it's driving already feuding exes to battle over how seriously the other is heeding stay-at-home orders.

Some divorces are unilaterally altering custody arrangements as many courts are closed except for emergency matters. Once the crisis settles, family lawyers — who said they've been inundated by calls and emails from distraught clients — said they expect to see pandemic clauses in future divorce and custody agreements.

"It's creating tremendous havoc on everybody," said Marilyn Chinitz, a matrimonial lawyer at Blank Rome in New York. "These are times where parents have to

be thoughtful, they have to think of the best interest of the children and not their own selfishness."

Squabbles over mundane tasks such as shopping for groceries have become common. One parent may never be leaving home, having all items delivered, while their former spouse is working as usual or less worried about the virus. Another issue is schooling now that parents are on the hook for guiding their children's at-home learning, said David Steerman, chairman of the family law group at Klehr, Harrison, Harvey, Branzburg LLP in Philadelphia. Adding to the problem is the courts' status.

T.J. Sjostrum, a 36-year-old researcher in Virginia, said he was getting ready to pick up his 10-year-old son when his ex-wife said she wanted the boy to stay with her for the duration of the stay-at-home order. He said he had already been waiting for a court hearing to revisit their custody plan and now doesn't know when he'll get one.

"She basically used this to indefinitely halt my custody with my son," Sjostrum said, adding the order allows for child custody transfers. "I really don't have any recourse. What is my recourse if I am not granted an emergency hearing?"

Sjostrum's ex-wife declined to be interviewed.

Once the courts reopen, judges probably won't look kindly on divorcees who unilaterally altered custody plans without a legitimate safety concern such as a child with a weakened immune system, said Marcia Zug, a law professor at the University of South Carolina who teaches courses on family law.

"For you not to return the child, you need to have a really good reason," she said.

Many split families are work-



MELISSA BIDDLE/AP

Melissa Biddle with her 20-month-old son as they talk on the phone with the boy's father in Delaware County, Pa., on March 30.

ing things out. Chinitz said one former couple decided to rent a home outside of virus-ravaged New York City for their child and they each take turns staying there and in a smaller home nearby.

Melissa Biddle, a 35-year-old from Delaware County, Pa., said she's caring full time for her 20-month-old son because her ex-husband has been working to repair heating and air systems in grocery stores, and they both agreed this carried too much risk.

Her current partner has a 12-year-old son who splits his time with them and his mom, who has a partner who has adult children. Biddle said she sometimes wonders if everyone is following public health orders.

"We're sort of like a blended family," she said, "Revolving doors on both ends."



T.J. SJOSTRUM/AP

T.J. Sjostrum with his son Nolan at Washington Dulles International Airport in Dulles, Va., on July 26, 2019.



CAROLINA McAULEY/AP

Carolina McAuley at her home in Wyckoff, N.J., on March 30.

Crime decreases around the world as people stay inside

Associated Press

CHICAGO — The coronavirus pandemic that has crippled big-box retailers and mom and pop shops worldwide may be making a dent in illicit business, too.

In Chicago, one of America's most violent cities, drug arrests have plummeted 42% in the weeks since the city shut down, compared with the same period last year. Part of that decrease, some criminal lawyers say, is that drug dealers have no choice but to wait out the economic slump.

"The feedback I'm getting is that they aren't able to move, to sell anything anywhere," said Joseph Lopez, a criminal lawyer in Chicago who represents reputed

drug dealers.

Overall, Chicago's crime declined 10% after the pandemic struck, a trend playing out globally as cities report stunning crime drops in the weeks since measures were put into place to slow the spread of the virus. Even among regions that have the highest levels of violence outside a war zone, fewer people are being killed and fewer robberies are taking place.

Still, law enforcement officials worry about a surge of unreported domestic violence, and what happens when restrictions limit — or go on too long.

It's rare for a city to see a double-digit drop in crime, even over a much longer period. During New

York City's 1990s crime decline, one of the biggest turnarounds in American history, crime dropped about 40% over three years.

Across Latin America, crime is down to levels unseen in decades. "Killings are down, and the gangsters aren't harassing so much," Eduardo Perdomo, a 47-year-old construction worker, said while getting off a bus in San Salvador. "I think they're afraid of catching the virus, and they aren't going out."

El Salvador reported an average of two killings a day last month, down from a peak of 600 a day a few years ago.

Much of the decrease has taken place because of tougher security policies and gang truces. But the

imposition of near-total limits on movement is likely driving it down further, according to analysts and national statistics.

In Peru, where crime levels fell 84% last month, Lima mortician Raul Gonzalez usually has as many as 15 bodies a day — many are homicide victims. This week he napped on a bench after six hours without a client.

"There are almost no killings or car accidents these days," Gonzalez said.

In South Africa, police reported a stunning decline during their first week of lockdown measures. Police Minister Bheki Cele said reported rapes were down from 700 to 101 over the same period last year. Serious assault cases

plummeted from 2,673 to 456, and murders fell from 326 to 94.

The U.S. virus epicenter in New York saw major crimes — murder, rape, robbery, burglary, assault, grand larceny and car theft — decrease by 12% from February to March. In Los Angeles, 2020 key crimes statistics were consistent with last year's figures until the week of March 15, when they dropped by 30%.

"There's a lot fewer opportunities for criminals to take advantage of," said Joe Giacalone, a former New York Police Department sergeant who now teaches at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "Most burglars, they wait for you to leave the house."

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Online powwows help keep tribes connected

By FELICIA FONSECA
Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — The names pop up quickly on Whitney Rencountre's computer screen, and he greets them as he would in person.

What's up, y'all? Shout out to you. How's it going? Ya'a'eeh. Good to see you, relatives.

He spots someone from the Menominee Nation, a Wisconsin tribe that hosts competitive dancers, singers and drummers in traditional regalia in late summer.

"Beautiful powwow there," he says.

The emcee from the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe in South Dakota typically is on the powwow circuit in the spring, joining thousands of others in colorful displays of culture and tradition that are at their essence meant to uplift people during difficult times. Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the gatherings are taking on a new form online.

"Sometimes we have this illusion that we're in total control, but it takes times like this of uncertainty and the challenges of the possibility of death to help us step back and reevaluate," said Rencountre, a co-organizer of the Facebook group Social Distance Powwow, which sprung up about a month ago as more states and tribes advised people to stay home.

Normally this time of year, a string of powwows hosted by Native American tribes and universities would be underway across the U.S., with tribal members honoring and showcasing their cultures — and socializing, like family reunions. The powwows represent an evolution of songs and dances from when tribal tra-



ELAINE THOMPSON/AP

Wakiyan Cuny, 16, left, and his sister Wicahpi Cuny, 14, Dakota and Lakota tribal members, wear ceremonial clothing while they are filmed by their mother, Tera Baker, during a livestreamed powwow from a park near their home in Puyallup, Wash., on April 4.

ditions were forced underground during European settlement, Rencountre said.

The pandemic has canceled or postponed virtually all of them, including two of the largest in the U.S. — the Denver March Powwow and the Gathering of Nations in Albuquerque, New Mexico, held in April.

Social Distance Powwow has helped fill the void, quickly growing to more than 125,000 members.

Members from different tribal nations post photos and videos of themselves and loved ones dancing, often in their regalia. The page has become a daily dose of prayer, songs, dances, well wishes, humor and happy birthdays.

In one video, Jordan Kor sits in his vehicle after a shift at a San Jose, Calif., hospital emergency

department. An old Dakota war song he learned as a child that can be a rallying cry was bouncing around his head. He pulls off his mask and cap and sings, slapping a beat on the steering wheel.

"The biggest ones, social distance, keep working in whatever it is that brings you joy and helps you keep connected," said Kor, who is Tarahumara and Wapetown Lakota. "And wash your hands!"

The page also hosts a weekly, live powwow with the organizers — Rencountre, Stephanie Hebert and Dan Simonds — assembling a lineup of volunteer drum groups, singers and dancers for the hours-long event. This past weekend, Rencountre patched people in from across the country on the live feed.

A marketplace on the site lets



Wicahpi Cuny dances during a livestreamed powwow.

vendors showcase their paintings, beadwork, jewelry, basketry and clothing.

An online powwow lacks some of the grandeur of being in person and seeing hundreds of performers fill an arena for the grand entry. It doesn't have a roll call of tribal royalty, singers and champion dancers. And it doesn't have categories for competitive dancing.

But it offers a way to keep people connected.

"When we dance, we are dancing for prayer and protection," said member Mable Moses of the Lumbee Tribe in North Carolina. "No matter what we do, may the Lord always protect us whether we're living or dying."

Moses learned to dance later in life and now competes in the "golden age" category at powwows. In a video of her Southern Traditional dance, she moves around a dogwood tree in her yard slowly but with high energy.

"Even though I'm 72, I'm like 29," she said.

Moses said the dance meant to calm people helps her cope with

the fear surrounding the coronavirus, and the difficulty of staying away from others.

Tribal members also are posting elsewhere on social media, including youth hoop dancers from Pojoaque Pueblo in New Mexico.

For those viewing for the first time, Rencountre encourages an open mind.

"We ask them to break down the wall, to feel the dances, to feel the songs, as you're watching," he said. "Don't think about it from a technical point of view. Understand the creation of these songs and dances comes from a place of uplifting."

Leila Peters grew up doing jingle dress dance meant for healing. The dress is characterized by cone-shaped jingles typically made from the lids of tobacco cans. Now, she does beadwork for her children's outfits and is a Seneca language teacher.

She recently posted a video of two of her children and their cousins doing a smoke dance in the living room of her home on the Tonawanda Indian Reservation northeast of Buffalo, N.Y. Its origins are mixed as a dance for people to bless themselves before they went to battle and a way to clear smoke from traditional homes called longhouses, she said.

Her children grow up knowing the respect and the protocol that accompany the dance and its songs. They also have fun with it, sometimes competing in the family's backyard to win cups of Kool-Aid or bags of candy, Peters said.

"For them, dancing is medicine on its own. It's everything to us," she said. "It's energy, it's athleticism, it's staying healthy and living a better life with food choices. It's not easy doing what they do."

Stripes

SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

Transportation

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VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDUP

Guardsmen spot check for virus at Florida nursing homes

Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE — Members of the Florida National Guard have started on-the-spot testing of residents at nursing homes for the new coronavirus as long-term care facilities in the state have reported scores of cases, Gov. Ron DeSantis said Saturday.

Guardsmen have conducted tests of residents and staff at nursing homes in South Florida and UF Health Shands has done other spot-testing at facilities, DeSantis said.

"We want to continue to do that, given that is the most high risk population," the governor said.

In Clay County, in the Jacksonville area, 49 cases have been reported at long-term care facilities, and 51 cases among residents and staff have been reported at a nursing home in Suwannee County, located halfway between Jacksonville and Tallahassee. Statewide, there were almost 840 coronavirus cases in residents and staff at long-term care facilities, as of Saturday.

Last month, DeSantis ordered a suspension of all visits to nursing homes, assisted living facilities and similar sites across the state.

As of Saturday evening, Florida had about 19,000 coronavirus cases and at least 446 deaths.

Georgia

ATLANTA — The number of confirmed cases of the coronavirus in Georgia has now surpassed 12,000, with the death toll at 432.

The state Department of Public Health reported an additional 400 cases and seven deaths on Saturday. The total number of cases now stands at over 12,500. Roughly 20% of those patients are hospitalized.

Gov. Brian Kemp has issued a statewide stay-at-home order lasting through the end of April, but houses of worship are still allowed to hold services as long as congregants remain 6 feet apart.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Mississippi

JACKSON — Mississippi officials have reported 11 additional deaths from the coronavirus, raising the state's death toll from the disease to at least 93, as the governor banned all elective surgeries including abortion.

The state Department of Health released the new figures on Saturday. They show the total number of virus cases at a little under 2,650.

Gov. Tate Reeves has encouraged residents to continue practicing social distancing over the Easter holiday by worshiping at home on Sunday.

In Friday, Reeves signed an order that banned any surgical

procedure not needed to save a life or correct a serious medical condition until April 27, including abortion. In a news briefing, Reeves said the order was needed to save medical equipment including protective gear because Mississippi was "moving to a peak" of its cases.

Nevada

Nevada's death toll from the coronavirus has topped 100 as the sweeping impacts of the outbreak across the state now include cancellation of the annual Burning Man festival.

The state's coronavirus website as of Saturday morning listed 2,700 cases statewide with 102 deaths, but the health districts for metro Las Vegas and metro Reno City together reported 106 deaths.

Burning Man Project officials on Friday announced cancellation of the annual event that was scheduled to be held Aug. 30 to Sept. 7 in the northern Nevada desert.

Organizers of Burning Man, a lifestyle and entertainment gathering that typically attracts 80,000 people, said in a Facebook post the cancellation was "in the interest of the health and well-being of our community."

"After much listening, discussion, and careful consideration, we have made the difficult decision not to build Black Rock City in 2020," organizers said in an online journal post. "Given the painful reality of COVID-19, one of the greatest global challenges of our lifetimes, we believe this is the right thing to do. Yes, we are heartbroken. We know you are too."

Organizers said they were committed to providing refunds for tickets already purchased. They asked purchasers to consider foregoing refunds because the organization faces layoffs, pay cuts and other belt-tightening measures.

New Mexico

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Saturday expanded her mass gatherings ban to combat spread of the coronavirus to include churches and other houses of worship on the eve of the Christian holy day of Easter.

Lujan Grisham's announcement of her deletion of a previous exemption for houses of worship said many New Mexico churches plan virtually all Easter services through means such as webstreaming.

"While this will be emotionally difficult for so many New Mexicans, public health must be the top priority. The only way to slow the spread of COVID-19 is by staying home and minimizing all person-to-person contact," Lujan Grisham said.



STEVE MARCUS, LAS VEGAS SUN/AP

The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds show their support for frontline COVID-19 healthcare workers and first responders with a flyover above Las Vegas on Saturday.

Texas

Texas continued to brace Saturday for a surge in hospital visits driven by the coronavirus pandemic as the state's death toll rose to more than 250.

Officials in Harris County unveiled a temporary overflow hospital that will be able to help take on patients during a heightened onslaught of COVID-19. Medical workers and journalists were taken on a tour of the as-yet-unopened facility on the day the U.S. eclipsed Italy for the highest number of coronavirus deaths in the world, surpassing 20,000.

"We still haven't reached the peak," Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo, the county's highest elected official, told reporters Saturday. Hidalgo added the field hospital won't be used until a sharp increase in coronavirus patients starts taxing existing hospital systems, which she expects to become an issue in the Houston area in two or three weeks.

The overflow shelter at Houston's NRG Park, where the Houston Texans play, will initially have 250 beds with a capacity of 2,000. Officials are setting up a similar overflow unit in Dallas.

Gov. Greg Abbott said Friday that Texas is "beginning to slow the growth of the coronavirus." He said he would issue an executive order next week laying out how Texas will eventually reopen for business. It is unclear when a loosening of restrictions might happen. Abbott put Texas under what amounts to a stay-at-home order until April 30.

As of Saturday, Texas officials confirmed about 12,500 people had tested positive for COVID-19, and 254 had died. Around 1,600 people have recovered from the disease.

Virginia

RICHMOND — Virginia re-

ported more than 550 new cases of COVID-19 on Saturday, the largest single-day increase so far in the coronavirus pandemic.

The new cases brought the confirmed total to 5,077, a figure that is almost certainly an undercount due to a lack of widespread testing and the likelihood that many people without symptoms could be spreading the highly contagious virus.

The death count increased from 121 to 130.

Washington

SEATTLE — Health authorities on Saturday reported 16 more coronavirus deaths in Washington, bringing the total to at least 491 in the state, and released more detailed information about hospitalizations and the racial breakdown of people with COVID-19.

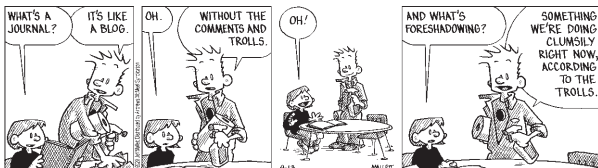
The Washington State Department of Health reported there were more than 10,200 confirmed cases. Authorities also had some numbers about the race and ethnicity of coronavirus cases, however that information was unavailable for more than half of the positive results. Of the cases where race and ethnicity was established, 58% were non-Hispanic white, 22% were Hispanic, 9% were Asian and 6% were black.

Of the 491 deaths, authorities say the race and ethnicity wasn't known for 191. Of the remaining COVID-19 fatalities, the health department said 76% were non-Hispanic white, 10% were Asian, 7% Hispanic and 3% black.

As of Friday, 78 hospitals reported 642 COVID-19 cases, with 191 people in intensive care.

Health officials say a steady decrease in COVID-19 hospitalizations is one of the metrics that will be evaluated to determine when social-distancing orders can be released.

Frazz



Dilbert



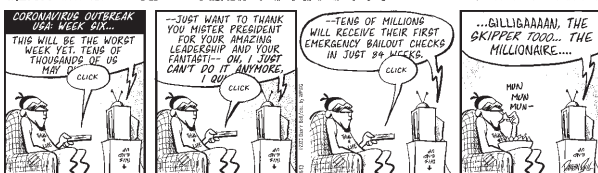
Pearly Before Swine



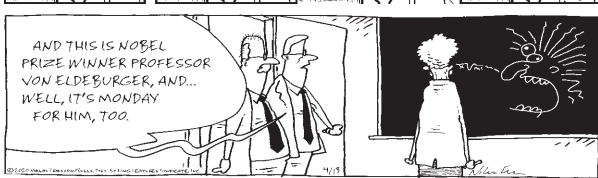
Non Sequitur



Candorville



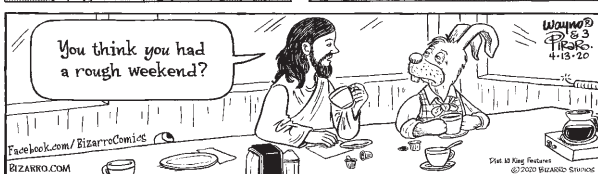
Carpe Diem



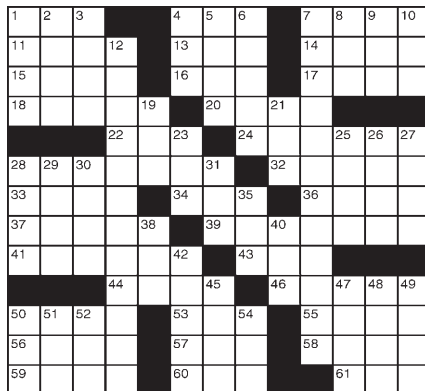
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Zing
- 4 Twisty letter
- 7 Cambodia neighbor
- 11 Sleep like —
- 13 Wrestling surface
- 14 Sty cry
- 15 Prison room
- 16 Spanish gold
- 17 MRI forerunner
- 18 Whale's home
- 20 Cookbook author Rombauer
- 22 Actress Saldana
- 24 Chanted word
- 28 Underground chambers
- 32 Perfect
- 33 Mellowed
- 34 Numerical prefix
- 36 Curse
- 37 Soft leather
- 39 Of the Muslim faith
- 41 Marsh birds
- 43 Harpy
- 44 Taboo
- 46 Noble gas
- 50 Pasta sauce brand
- 53 "Big Blue"
- 55 Theater section
- 56 Border on
- 57 Quick swim
- 58 Achy

DOWN

- 59 Calendar squares
- 60 Roswell visitors
- 61 Homer's neighbor
- 19 Hide-hair insert
- 21 — tai (cocktail)
- 23 Tolkien creature
- 25 Squad
- 26 Hindu royal
- 27 Actor Baldwin
- 28 Moolah
- 29 Chills and fever
- 30 Swerve
- 31 — Lanka
- 35 Somewhat (Suff.)
- 38 Rock's Brian
- 40 Remiss
- 42 Disparaging
- 45 Final notice
- 47 Lunch hour
- 48 Monster
- 49 Must have
- 50 "Way cool!"
- 51 Lawyers' gp.
- 52 Chap
- 54 AWOL pursuers

Answer to Previous Puzzle



4-13

CRYPTOQUIP

V N K G L E - D Z T I K F L M K V Z O E
X L E E Y I X I Z H L M Z O E L V
R N R - V N K G P Y I X L V
H N V Y P P L E E L : P R Z K L
P F T E E D L Z D Z I Y P.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: KIDS' SONG ABOUT SOME RODENTS THAT FELL INTO A TUB OF PICKLING SOLUTION: "THREE BRINED MICE."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals I

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police impersonators on the rise, reports say

KS TOPEKA — Authorities are investigating a spike in people impersonating law enforcement officers in Kansas.

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation said in a news release that it has identified about 10 reports of suspected law enforcement impersonations in the past several weeks in multiple counties. There have been no reports of injuries or thefts.

The KBI says that the impersonator often questions whether the driver's travel is "essential," or asks for workplace documentation. The Kansas stay-at-home order doesn't require people to carry a letter, identification card or other paper proving that they are allowed to leave their homes.

Man with gun threatens a waving Easter Bunny

OH MIDDLEBOURNE — Charges are pending against a man accused of brandishing a gun and threatening an Easter Bunny waving to motorists from an Ohio interstate overpass, authorities said.

The man, who is 49, was arrested in Middlebourne in Guernsey County, The Daily Jeffersonian reported. He was given a breath-alcohol test at an Ohio State Highway Patrol post but was taken to a medical facility when jail officials refused to book him because of an elevated temperature.

Guernsey County Sgt. Jason Best said that the man could face charges of aggravated menacing and improper handling of a firearm in a vehicle.

A 22-caliber handgun and an open 12-pack of beer were seized as evidence. Deputies said that the man slurred his words and smelled of alcohol.

Naked woman refuses orders to leave airport

LA KENNER — A woman walked into an airport without any clothes on and refused to leave after airline officials told her she couldn't travel, authorities in Louisiana said.

Mariel Vergara of Pueblo, Colo., was naked when she approached the Spirit Airlines ticket counter at Louis Armstrong International Airport, The Times-Picayune reported.

A Jefferson Parish deputy was called, and Vergara, 27, had put on a dress by the time he arrived. But, she was still blocked from traveling because she wasn't wearing underwear, and her dress didn't fully cover her private parts, the newspaper reported.

Vergara ignored orders to leave and scuffled with deputies before being arrested on charges including obscenity and battery of a police officer.

Man stabs friend with scissors, flees scene

MA RAYNHAM — Police in Massachusetts are seeking a man who they say stabbed a woman six times with a



STEPHEN M. DOWELL/ORLANDO SENTINEL/AP

Parade pose

Orlando Police officers pose for a picture with the Easter Bunny before an Easter parade in Orlando, Fla., on Saturday. The parade was conducted with "social distancing" to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

pair of scissors in her home.

A man, 24, allegedly attacked the woman in her Raynham home and fled on foot through a nearby wooded area. The man and the victim were friends, police said in a statement.

The woman was taken to a local hospital with serious but non-life-threatening injuries.

The man has a warrant out for his arrest on charges of attempted murder, mayhem, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, and assault and battery. Officers have located the scissors the man allegedly used to stab the victim.

Zoo recaptures highly valued accreditation

HI HONOLULU — The Honolulu Zoo has been accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums after years of efforts to recapture the designation.

The zoo announced that the facility has sought to renew its accreditation since 2016, The Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported.

The association represents more than 230 facilities in the U.S. and abroad, according to its website.

The Honolulu Zoo, operated by the city's Department Enterprise Services, submitted an application in September in the hope of winning approval in four years.

The association requires zoos and aquariums to complete the accreditation process every five

THE CENSUS

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him from his role as a handyman. The original charges included attempted first-degree murder, arson and assault.

years to maintain membership, which is considered a mark of recognition by a group of animal and conservation experts. The accreditation also gives zoos access to breeding programs, resources and conferences.

Woman involved in two shootings hours apart

NJ TEANECK — A woman was involved in two shootings that occurred hours apart in two different northern New Jersey towns and left a man injured, authorities said.

Tanykah Trival, 25, of Teaneck, was charged with two counts of attempted murder and weapons offenses.

The first shooting occurred shortly before midnight April 6 in Teaneck. The second shooting occurred several hours later in Bergenfield, when someone in an SUV fired several shots into a car occupied by two men. The car's driver was hit by at least one shot and was treated at a hospital for

The number of years in prison to which Todd Perkins was sentenced for intentionally causing an explosion that leveled a one-story brick rowhome in Denver on Aug. 14, 2018. The explosion injured nine people, including Perkins. Prosecutors said Perkins was retaliating against the owner of the building, who had recently fired

injuries that were not considered serious.

An investigation determined that the other man in the car, who was not injured, apparently was the intended target of both shootings, authorities said. The shootings apparently stemmed from a domestic dispute, but further details were not disclosed.

Police rescue child trapped in storm grate

MD MANCHESTER — Authorities in Maryland rescued a boy who fell 10 feet down a concrete hole and became trapped inside.

The child, 4, was flown to a Baltimore hospital and was in stable condition, police said.

Officers with the Manchester Police Department were called to a nursing home where they found the child conscious, but stuck, The Carroll County Times reported, citing police.

The child's family was outside the nursing home speaking with

relatives through a window, limiting their exposure because of the coronavirus, when the boy pulled on an unsecured storm grate cover and fell in, according to Manchester Police Chief John Hessa.

Sanitation worker helps save bleeding woman

FL PENSACOLA — A Florida sanitation worker doing his regular rounds rescued a woman who was having a medical emergency in her driveway.

The Pensacola News Journal reported that Ronald Booker got out of his truck and asked the woman if she was all right. Then he noticed blood and that she was holding a sweat against her arm.

The woman told Booker she had come from dialysis and that her blood didn't clot properly. The bandage on her arm was not tight enough.

Booker said he called 911 and stayed with the woman, trying to staunch the blood flow and keeping her awake by telling jokes. When he ambulance arrived, Booker says he stayed a little longer to make sure the woman's health was secured.

"It's a human life, I couldn't just ride by," Booker told the newspaper. "I'm just thankful I was there at the right time and the right place."

From wire reports

FACES

giving
success
the side-eye

Domhnall Gleeson, top, is shown with "Run" costar Merritt Wever.

HBO photos

Domhnall Gleeson doesn't fit the celebrity mold, and he's fine with that

BY ASHLEY SPENCER
Special to The Washington Post

Domhnall Gleeson is facing a dilemma. Should the man who played General Hux in "Star Wars" and Bill Weasley in "Harry Potter" wield his power to encourage fans to stay home during a global pandemic?

"Some part of you imagines maybe it'd be a good thing to weigh in, and I really admire people who do," he said during a recent phone interview from his Dublin apartment, where he's been sequestered during the coronavirus crisis. "But then there's the self-loathing part of one's nature that is telling, 'Who the ... are you to be telling people how to live their lives just because you're an actor?'"

It's a sentiment the 36-year-old wrestles with daily.

On the one hand, he's a massively successful star who's juggled two blockbuster franchises with awards season fare like "Brooklyn" and "The Revenant" and playing Mr. McGregor in "Peter Rabbit." On the other, he's a fiercely private Irishman who doesn't understand why anyone should take an interest in his life off-set at all.

But these are strange times, and the lanky redhead whose first name rhymes with "tonal" has been stuck in his apartment for weeks. Instead of jetting to New York and Los Angeles to promote his new HBO series "Run" ahead of its April 12 premiere, he's doing at-home yoga ("outrageous behavior") and cooking amatriciana with guanciale he bought from a shop down the street "just to show off."

There's been a comforting living-room double feature of "Mary Poppins" and "Singin' in the Rain," favorites from his youth growing up in the Dublin suburbs with his parents (his dad is acclaimed actor Brendan Gleeson, who co-starred in "Braveheart") and played "Mad Eye" Moody in "Harry Potter") and three brothers. And the now-familiar gasps of horror while watching TV shows where people gather in large groups and hug on the street. "You find yourself shaking your head and saying, 'For God's sake, will they not maintain social distance!'" he said. "It is absolutely bananas how the world suddenly seems so different."

In fact, the entire premise of "Run" now feels like a relic from our not-so-distant pre-isolation past. Created by "Fleabag" and "Killing Eve" collaborator Vicky Jones and

co-executive produced by Phoebe Waller-Bridge, the series stars Gleeson as Billy, a motivational speaker who reunites with his college ex Ruby ("Unbelievable" star Merritt Wever) 17 years later as they fulfill a pact that if either of them texts the word "RUN" and the other replies, they'll flee their existing lives and catch the next train out of Grand Central together.

It's a rivetingly twisty series and a far cry from Gleeson's previous romantic-comedy turn in Richard Curtis' 2013 tear-jerker "About Time." Cracking with sexual tension,

with anybody else. Some things are precious. Why on earth would you share them?"

Gleeson is, in many ways, the anti-celebrity. He talks unapologetically about his distinct lack of abs and social media presence. ("My friend sent me a link to TikTok the other day and I was like, what is this newfangled technology? It seems to be like Twitter!")

After dabbling in Irish TV and movies, and giving a Tony-nominated Broadway performance in 2006's "The Lieutenant of Inishmore," Gleeson broke out in 2010 playing the eldest Weasley in "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Parts 1 & 2." "Anna Karenina" and the critically acclaimed "Ex Machina" followed and, in 2015, a bumper lineup of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," "Brooklyn" and "The Revenant."

As the self-effacing actor's profile grew, his cherished anonymity shrunk — especially among the rabid "Star Wars" fandom that hung on his every word during promo tours for the sequel trilogy, which ended with December's "The Rise of Skywalker."

"Everything about the 'Star Wars' experience was amazing for me apart from being a little bit better known for a while, which is a little scary," he said, careful to emphasize his gratitude. "I wasn't happy about that, but every other aspect was incredible."

When Gleeson first started working overseas, he learned to temper his thick Irish accent. Talk a little slower, a little clearer. "You do become aware that people need to understand what you're saying," he said, noting that "Run" is one of the only projects that's allowed him to use his native accent on screen. "When I first went to meet my agents in America, they didn't know what the hell was going on when I started talking."

The pandemic forced Gleeson to cut short production on his upcoming Amazon comedy series, "Frank of Ireland," a passion project with his brother Brian, and postponed the theatrical release of "Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway" until August.

"I can afford to kind of sit out the next few months. I'm OK in my apartment, but there's so many people in the industry who may have trouble paying rent already, and then this on top of it, it's just an absolute nightmare," he said. "But I believe we'll get through this and, on the far side, there will be an even greater need to be with people. I can't wait to go to the cinema and be annoyed by the person sitting next me eating popcorn."

BTS plans
free online
concert event

From wire reports

K-pop sensation BTS is hosting a "special online streaming" party April 17-18, more than a month after the group began canceling tour dates due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The virtual BTS fest, dubbed Bang Bang Con, will feature a marathon of concert footage taped before the pandemic shut down live events around the world.

Starting at 10 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on April 17, the Friday lineup includes video from BTS' 2015 HYHY live concert, 2016's HYHY Epilogue, 2014's Red Bull Live trilogy and 2016's 3rd Muster. The cyber-extravaganza will resume at the same time on April 18, with 2017's Wings Tour live in Seoul, Wings Tour: The Final, 2018's 4th Muster and 2018's Love Yourself Seoul concert.

Bang Bang Con is the latest effort by the "ON" artists to continue entertaining their fans while in self-quarantine. Last month, members RM, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, Jimin, V and Jungkook took part in James Corden's "Homefest" special, which featured Billie Eilish, Andrea Bocelli, Dua Lipa and more.

Set to stream on April 18 is Global Citizen and Lady Gaga's "One World: Together At Home" coronavirus relief event, hosted by Jimmy Kimmel, Jimmy Fallon and Stephen Colbert, and welcoming musical guests such as Eilish, Lizzo, J Balvin, Elton John, John Legend, Stevie Wonder and Kacey Musgraves.

BTS's Bang Bang Con will be available to watch for free on the band's YouTube channel, BANGTANTV.

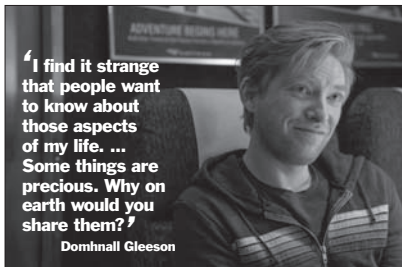
Mad magazine
illustrator Drucker dies

Mort Drucker, the Mad Magazine cartoonist who for decades lovingly spoofed politicians, celebrities and popular culture, died April 9. He was 91.

Drucker's daughter, Laurie Bachner, told The Associated Press that he fell ill late last month, had difficulty walking and developed breathing problems. She did not give a specific cause of death and said he was not tested for the coronavirus.

Mad magazine was a cultural institution for millions of baby boomers, and Drucker was an institution at Mad. A New York City native, he joined Mad in its early days, the mid-1950s, and remained well into the 21st century. Few major events or public figures during that time escaped Drucker's satire, whether "Star Trek" and "The Godfather" or Steve Martin and Jerry Seinfeld.

Besides Mad, Drucker drew for Time magazine, DC Comics, for an ad campaign for fruit and vegetables and for the heavy hitters during that time: escaped Anthrax, which commissioned him to design art for its "State of Euphoria" album.



"I find it strange that people want to know about those aspects of my life. ... Some things are precious. Why on earth would you share them?"

Domhnall Gleeson

"Run" teases its characters' dark secrets and does out nuggets of sordid backstory as Gleeson and Wever run, jump and attempt to have train sex on their cross-country Amtrak escape. The "stunty stuff" delighted Gleeson, despite having just undergone hernia surgery a week and a half before shooting began.

His attraction to the show was threefold: the chance to work with Jones and Waller-Bridge since, he said, "Fleabag" spoke to my soul; the connection to his own U.S. railway experience during "a time of upheaval" when he wanted to run away from "a couple of things, which are probably too personal to talk about"; and doing a show about love.

Gleeson loves love. But apart from a few anecdotal references to unnamed ex-girlfriends and some fans' insistence that he's long been dating Irish producer Juliette Bonass, he's never publicly discussed his relationship status.

"I find it strange that people want to know about those aspects of my life. And then I also find it odd that I'm quite so defensive about it," he said. "I think I hate the notion of anybody being defined by anybody else, and that seems to be what happens when anybody who happens to be in the public eye goes out

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OPINION

Mail-in voting is the only safe option for 2020

By NOAH FELDMAN
Bloomberg Opinion

Mail-in voting is the best way to ensure that the November 2020 election can proceed safely despite the coronavirus pandemic. It's all too likely we'll still be dealing with outbreaks then, and it's well before we'll have a vaccine. The U.S. needs to start making plans for mail-in ballots now; and yet President Donald Trump has begun to make it clear he intends to stymie any large-scale vote-by-mail efforts.

Mail-in voting will become the key battleground because it's essentially the only realistic option for holding an election during a pandemic. Trump can't delay the Nov. 3 vote — that's beyond his constitutional power. In fact, the Constitution doesn't provide any option for suspending or delaying a presidential or congressional election.

Congress "may determine the Time of choosing the Electors, and the Day on which they shall give their Votes," according to the Constitution, but precedent makes it pretty certain that Congress won't delay the presidential election either; it didn't do so even in 1864, when the Civil War was in full swing.

What about the states? Well, technically, individual states could choose their presidential electors themselves, without holding a popular vote. That's the way states did it in the early decades of the Republic. That history has led some fretful folks to ask me whether some state legislatures might call off the 2020 vote and just let their electors decide how to allocate the states' electoral votes. In practice, though, it seems unlikely to the point of impossibility that governors and state legislatures would steal the election from the public.

Hence the dispute over mail-in ballots. Conventional wisdom is that mail-in voting would be good for Democrats and bad



JOHN FROSCHAUER/AP

Wearing gloves, an election worker collects ballots from a drop box in Washington State's primary, March 10 in Seattle.

for Republicans. I am far from certain that the conventional wisdom will prove to be true, since mail-in voting under pandemic conditions may actually disadvantage some key Democratic constituencies (like young voters, or poor ones, or elderly African Americans) more than it disadvantages Republican voting blocs. But Trump seems to be inclined to accept the conventional wisdom.

The upshot is that we are seeing the emergence of a partisan struggle over mail-in voting. As Wisconsin held its own coronavirus-constrained primary, Trump discouraged the state from creating the extensive mail-in ballot options that alone can solve the problem of voting during a pandemic. Democrats have proposed a bill in Congress, known as the Resilient Elections During Quarantines and Natural Disasters Act of 2020, that would provide financial incentives to push the states to allow absentee, mail-in voting for any reason.

Trump in turn denounced previous Democratic bills in nakedly self-interested terms: "They had things, levels of voting,"

he said, "that if you'd ever agreed to it, you'd never have a Republican elected in this country again."

It's a hard lift to find a valid reason to oppose letting people vote by mail, considering the broad availability of absentee voting (already available in at least 34 states), not to mention the realities of a global pandemic. Trump's solution is to point to the threat of voter fraud that he associates with mail-in ballots.

Republicans in recent years have passed voter ID laws aimed to check identification, and in theory, make fraudulent voting more difficult. But as experts have repeatedly pointed out in court battles over these voter ID laws, the actual instances of voter fraud are very tiny relative to the pervasiveness and effect of the laws. It's an open secret that voter ID laws are intended to disproportionately discourage people from groups who tend to vote Democratic from casting ballots.

Naïve as it is to imagine that anything is outside the bounds of partisanship in an election year, it's still worth making the point that elections are supposed to give effect to the preferences of the voters. No one should have to risk his or her life to go to the polls. If states either constrain absentee voting or lack the resources to enable it to function effectively, the consequences for our democracy could be disastrous. Enabling a free and fair vote even under pandemic conditions should be the very epitome of a nonpartisan objective.

It's time for responsible Republicans to stand up and say that there is no other choice but mail-in voting. In the spirit of 1864, we must hold the election by any means necessary.

Noah Feldman is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. Before as the government continues its is a professor of law at Harvard University and is a clerk of U.S. Supreme Court Justice David Souter. He has been called "The New York Times' James Madison: Genius, Partisan, President."

Turkey using pandemic to repress political prisoners

By CAN DUNDAR

Special to The Washington Post

Turkey has become the country with the fastest-rising number of coronavirus cases, with nearly 50,000 cases and nearly 1,000 deaths since the first case was diagnosed on March 10. But rather than addressing these worrisome trends, Turkey's parliament is busy debating a law to release 90,000 criminals from prison — while keeping political prisoners locked up.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has hit multiple birds with one stone by bringing up this bill in a time of crisis. He is redirecting attention from his government's unsuccessful battle against the new coronavirus and would, at least partially, mitigate the significant risk that the virus could pose for prison populations by reducing the number of people behind bars. But there are signs that he will use this bill for his own political purposes. While releasing some of his supporters, he is not releasing any of Turkey's tens of thousands of political prisoners.

When Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002, the number of detainees and prisoners in the country was 60,000. This has increased to nearly 300,000 one of the key reasons this number has grown so significantly is that the government is creating new crimes. For example, according to reports from the Ankara Bar Association, more than 100,000 people have been under investigation for allegations of insulting the president.

As political pressure evoked new in-

sults, and insults brought imprisonment, the government had to build 178 new prisons. Even this has not been able to meet the "demand." Now, with the suspended sentences, about one-third of prisoners crammed in cells will be released. But of course, the ones who insulted the president are not up for amnesty. This is because the cases brought against most of them are not for "criticizing the government" but for "membership in a terrorist organization." They convicted of this — including journalists arrested for their reporting, writers convicted for commentary, human rights activists imprisoned for participating in a protest, or politicians held in prison for speeches — could face years more behind bars.

This leads to a grave injustice: While the bill would allow for the release of a swindler imprisoned for corruption, it would keep in prison a university student who called Erdogan a "thief," resulting in a scenario in which calling someone a "thief" is punished more severely than committing theft. In the same vein, a bureaucrat who accepts bribes could be released, while the journalist who reports on the bribery would remain imprisoned.

A police officer, found guilty of killing a protester with a shot to the head in the 2013 Gezi Park protests, was sentenced last month to six years and 10 months in prison. With the new law, he could be released in a few months. Meanwhile, businessman Osman Kavala has been held in prison for two months on charges of financing the Gezi Park protests without any convincing evidence, already spending more than two years in prison on a charge he was

acquitted of in February. Similarly, Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yucelkdag, the former co-presidents of parliament's second-biggest opposition party, the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), have been in prison for about 3½ years. They are also considered guilty of terrorism and therefore would not be up for amnesty under the law.

Preparations have already begun for the prison beds that will be emptied from the detainees as the government continues its crackdown on dissent. Writing about the possibility of the government requisitioning bank deposits from citizens, Fatih Portakal, an anchor on Turkey's Fox TV news station, recently tweeted: "I hope they won't say 'These are tough times' to ask for money from people with deposits and sayings... Unfortunately I can't be sure that they won't." Erdogan's lawyer immediately released a statement announcing legal action, saying, "These statements were geared towards manipulating the public." This pressure forces his opponents to think twice before even sharing a critical post about the government on social media.

Journalists and activists in Turkey already know to pack their bags or plan for an extended stay in prison when the president files a criminal complaint. There is no independent judiciary that could uphold the rights of political prisoners. And very soon, there will be plenty of room in Turkey's prisons to house even more political prisoners — when they all should be immediately freed.

Can Dunder, the former editor in chief of the leading Turkish newspaper Cumhuriyet, is now living in exile.

OPINION

Coronavirus puts an end to politics as usual

By KATHLEEN PARKER
Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON
Mass burials in New York; homeless shelters in San Francisco; record unemployment.

A list of COVID-19's effects could fill this space and far more, but most people know the headlines. We see what's on our television screens and beyond our windows. One can't overstate the ways and dimensions of how this virus has changed our world. Anti-globalists will want to use the pandemic to make their case, but we may as well hate mass transportation.

Even if we flatten that blasted curve, we're told, the virus will return. Which means if we are ever released to go back to work or play, we will soon be coming back home. Next flu season, the virus may have mutated for its own survival. So, we must as well.

But how? Until we have a vaccine, all bets are off. We know that there will be another epidemic — and perhaps one after that — the next time a virus makes the leap from an exotic animal to a human in a wet market on a distant continent. COVID-19 went around the world in 100 days.

Depressing, yes. In New York, cardiac arrest calls to 9-1-1 are surging. Bright spots of generosity and stories of heroism in our hospitals buoy our spirits in flashes of light, but dimness soon follows as we wonder whether and when this nightmare will end.

Amid all this, one thing is certain: BS is dead. Which is to say, politics as we know it is dead.

That's a (small) reason to celebrate. The endless and often pointless art of pitting one side against another is unhelpful in a world on fire. House and Senate Democrats are holding up legislation aimed at

saving small businesses — the core of the American economy — because they want to attach their own policy priorities.

The sometimes diverting sport of who's up and who's down is no longer relevant or interesting. Even in a presidential election year, the stakes are so vastly elevated that the usual measures and markers seem ridiculous. With whom would you rather drink a beer? Are you kidding?

Words like "slick" and "Teflon" to describe politicians who escape scrutiny or condemnation for deeds dubious can be shelved; only one kind of immunity interests us now. Retail politics are passe as well. The primary debates held just a few months ago seem like artifacts from a distant time. What networks call a "candidate town hall" is now anathema in most states. Conventions will be virtual and parades and walk-a-thons to #getoutthere are now danger zones. Nobody cares if Joe Biden can still jog.

Tough my baby and you're dead.

Everyone is walking around with 10-foot poles. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, was singing my tune when he said we should give up handshaking for good. Why did we stop wearing gloves, anyway? Social kissing? See ya. Social distancing is a fine idea. Space is what we value now.

How, then, will politicians — our would-be leaders — try to connect with us going forward? As much as possible. Donald Trump is dialing up his daily presence on TV, surrounded by his personal en-biden club, though it may work against him. Biden might be in a tighter spot: the most high-touch pol in memory is now trying to read a teleprompter in his basement rec room.

We don't need comedians, celebrities or

The Cartoonists



IN TIME, WE'RE ALL GONNA GET OUR GAME BACK

"nice" guys leading the ranks. Like the patient who doesn't care if a brilliant doctor has a lousy bedside manner, the country is tilting toward a more serious kind of leadership. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's daily briefings are a reminder that style has little value in a democracy in crisis. Joe Friday, the deadpan detective in the TV series "Dragnet," might win in a landslide today.

Really, baby. We're all looking down the gun barrel of reality, the upshot of which is a reordering of priorities. The economic wreckage might help the challenger; but the new American carnage may present Trump with a chance to polish off his old scapegoats. Everything he campaigned for

in 2016 would resonate more today than ever. China lied; people died.

The virus certainly has changed the political conversation. The jobs undocumented populations took because nobody else wanted them are now jobs that everybody wants. Millions of small businesses are applying for relief. We don't have bread lines (yet) but the Los Angeles Times recently featured a photo of a mother and her son hawking masks on a street corner.

If Americans weren't fed up before, mass burials and vacant downtowns will fill their plates with discontent. And making America great again will be the challenge of the millennium. If we're up to it.

Best way to reboot the economy? Revive the Trump approach.

By ANDY PUZZER
Special to The Washington Post

The federal government is doing what it can to stabilize the economy during the coronavirus shutdown, including passing a \$2.2 trillion relief package. These extraordinary bipartisan interventions will help get people through the next month or two. But when the crisis abates, how will we restart the economy?

The truth is, no one really knows if it's possible to shut down an economy such as ours and then successfully restart it. The situation reminds me of the scene in the movie "Apollo 13" where the astronauts had to shut off everything in the capsule and then reboot it from scratch. Nobody knew if the systems would restart.

So, what about the U.S. economy? How long do we wait to go back to work? How many people either have to be declared immune or decide they cannot afford to self-isolate anymore before the reboot begins? The longer we wait to answer those questions, the more serious they become. The medical threat isn't the only problem COVID-19 is creating. There is also an economic threat. As a recent article from the Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center noted, "the virus is lethal; but so is poverty."

I think the economy will indeed restart, thanks to the vast potential of enterprising Americans. But the real question is whether the recovery will be relatively rapid or

We need policies that incentivize investors to invest, businesses to hire and workers to work. Otherwise, we will end up with years of economic stagnation.

some form of enduring stagnation.

Milton Friedman was the first economist to recognize that the deeper the recession, the faster and stronger the recovery. While the U.S. economy grew following the Great Recession of 2008-2009, it never got that post-recession bump because President Barack Obama pursued policies that grew government while burdening businesses with new laws and regulations that discouraged growth and hiring.

Conversely, President Donald Trump has relied on generally pro-growth policies — particularly tax reductions and regulatory reform. (His tariff wars are an exception.) By the end of 2019, the Federal Register of regulations had been chopped by about 25%, to roughly 73,000 pages, from the record-setting total of nearly 100,000 pages in 2016, at the end of Obama's second term.

Trump's pro-growth policies produced the strongest labor market in modern

times. Unemployment consistently hit 50-year lows, the number of people employed hit historic highs, and job openings exceeded the number of people unemployed for the first time since the government began reporting the data. With employers competing for workers, wage growth hit 3% for the first time in nearly a decade and stayed at or above 3% for 20 consecutive months. That was all before COVID-19 hit America's shores.

If the economy is going to recover quickly, the key element will be a return to the business-friendly economic policies of the past three years, enhanced by recent trade triumphs such as the "phase one" trade deal with China and the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. We need policies that incentivize investors to invest, businesses to hire and workers to work. Otherwise, we will end up with years of economic stagnation — what Obama once called the "new normal" — rather than the growth in jobs, wages and prosperity that became the norm under Trump.

One potential positive outcome of the crisis would be if the debt the United States has incurred to stimulate the economy also stimulated an honest discussion about the national debt and deficit spending. Something was always going to have to be done about the spiraling debt; for good reasons, the federal government just put that spiral on steroids. But maybe now, Congress will recognize that addressing these long-delayed matters is essential before the coun-

try is struck by another crisis.

A wild card in the recovery will be how people's habits have changed and what that will mean for the economy. There are serious questions about the viability of many large businesses in the aftermath of the pandemic. Is the cruise ship industry sunk? How will movie theaters cope when people have become accustomed to consuming even the newest releases from the comfort of their living rooms, far from potential virus exposure? Will people permanently lose their appetite for traveling in packed airliners, staying in hotels, eating out or going to fitness centers?

My wife, Dee, and I have become very accustomed to the convenience of delivery services such as Uber Eats — and we bought a treadmill. Millions of people have made similar adjustments that may become permanent, a mass of individual decisions causing seismic economic shifts.

Much of this would have happened over time as people grew increasingly reliant on technology, but the process has accelerated. During times of rapid innovation and economic disruption, pro-growth, free-market policies take on an added importance. Following the pro-growth road map the president laid out over the past three years will be essential if the country is going to take maximum advantage of new opportunities and minimize the costs incurred in the war against the pandemic.

Andy Puzzer is the former chief executive of CKE Restaurants and the author of the forthcoming "Getting America Back to Work."



MILITARY MATTERS



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CURTIS COMPTON, ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION/AP

The John C. Calhoun Expressway that turns into Washington Road at the Augusta National Golf Club is quiet on what would have been the first practice round for the Masters on April 6 in Augusta, Ga.

Eerie: Sites of sports traditions feel the pinch

FROM BACK PAGE

While the Masters has been rescheduled for November, it won't be quite the same.

Another event seeping in tradition, the Kentucky Derby is headed for quite a shake-up — assuming it actually gets to the starting gate.

The Run For The Roses is usually held on the first Saturday of May. Because of the pandemic, hold those mint juleps until Labor Day weekend, when the first leg of the Triple Crown is crammed into a slot that also marks the start of college football season.

Not so fortunate: The College World Series in Omaha, Neb., and the Women's College World Series in Oklahoma City, both of which have already been wiped from the 2020 calendar.

The NCAA Division I baseball championship has been decided in Omaha for the past 70 years. The eight-team tournament is such a part of the city's identity that \$100 million TD Ameritrade Park was constructed a decade ago in exchange for a 25-year promise not to move the event.

Rich Tokheim's sports apparel shop is right across the street from the 24,000-seat stadium, which is dark most of the year other than the occasional local college game played before sparse crowds. More than half Tokheim's annual revenue comes from those 11 or 12 days when the CWS is held each June.

"We're here because of the College World Series," he said. "It's just so many people."

Oklahoma City will feel a similar blow in late May and early June, when it was supposed to host the Division I softball tournament for the 30th time.

To accommodate what were expected to be record crowds, USA Softball Hall of Fame Stadium underwent a 4,000-seat expansion that raised its capacity to about 13,000.

All the new seats were already sold out.

Other prominent events are still clinging to the hope of being held.

But each day of mounting deaths



DAVE WEAVER/AP

The College World Series in Omaha, Neb., is one of several major sports events that have been canceled by the coronavirus pandemic.

tolls and millions of people locked down in their homes makes it increasingly unlikely that either the Little League World Series — actually played in South Williamsport — or the Cheyenne Frontier Days in Wyoming's capital city will carry on as planned in 2020.

"If we were going to play the world series, traditionally like we have done for many, many years, we need to be playing and picking teams by the middle of June," said Little League President Stephen Keener, who has yet to set a drop-dead date for deciding whether the season-ending tournament will be held in its usual August slot.

Cheyenne Frontier Days, billed as the "Daddy of 'em all," has celebrated the cowboy way of life for 123 consecutive years. In 2019, it drew more than a quarter-million people to what is essentially a supersized county fair, a mix of rodeo events, musical acts, artery-busting food and carnival rides stretching over 10 days in July. For now, Frontier Days remains suspended on the calendar.

But the countdown clock on the festival's web site is a stark reminder that time is running out on a festival that generated nearly \$28 million for the county a year ago.

"Through all the wars, through

the depression, we've never missed a year," lamented CEO Tom Hirsig, whose event is scheduled from July 17-26. "It certainly wouldn't be the end of Cheyenne Frontier Days, but it could change the face of it to miss a year."

Augusta National, which includes some of the world's wealthiest and most influential people among its members, can weather the pandemic's financial impact better than most sports institutions.

But it's going to be a much tougher blow for those outside the gates, who rely on the Masters to provide a huge boost to their bottom lines. It remains to be seen how many will still be around in November to reap the benefits of a rescheduled tournament.

The Masters is even more intertwined with the local community because of all the private homes that are rented out to handle the huge influx of tournament spectators, sponsors and media who descend on Augusta each year — far more than can be handled by the limited hotel space.

This is usually a week when thousands of locals head for the beach or take a cruise.

Now, most everyone is stuck at home.

Sports — and some of its most iconic cities — have gone dark.

Briefly

Oilers' Cave dies at 25 from brain bleed

Associated Press

TORONTO — Colby Cave, an excellent teammate whose lone goal for the Edmonton Oilers this season came on an "awesome" rush down the ice, died Saturday after a brain bleed this week. He was 25.

The NHL club did not say what caused the bleed. Cave's agent, Jason Davidson, has said the condition did not appear linked to the coronavirus.

"Our Colby was loved dearly by us, his family and friends, the entire hockey community, and many more," his family said in a statement.

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said Cave's "life and hockey career, though too short, were inspiringly emblematic of the best of our game."

"Undrafted but undaunted, Colby was relentless in the pursuit of his hockey dream," he added.

Cave was placed in a medically induced coma Tuesday at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto. He was airlifted to Toronto after being admitted to a hospital in Barrie, Ontario, on Monday. Cave underwent emergency surgery Tuesday to remove a blood clot causing pressure on the brain.

British racing great Moss, 90, dies

LONDON — Stirling Moss, a daring, speed-loving Englishman regarded as the greatest Formula One driver never to win the world

championship, has died. He was 90.

Though he retired young, at 31, he raced in 107 different types of car and boasted a record of 212 wins in the 375 competitive races he finished.

Moss died peacefully at his London home following a long illness, his wife, Susan, said Sunday.

Source: Karnisovas to lead Bulls' operations

CHICAGO — The Chicago Bulls came into the season thinking they were poised to contend for a playoff spot. The plan did not unfold the way they envisioned, and now, they have a new leader in the front office.

The Bulls hired Denver Nuggets general manager Arturas Karnisovas to run their basketball operation, a person familiar with the situation said Thursday night.

Booker wins NBA 2K20 Players in all-Suns final

Devin Booker won the NBA 2K20 Players Tournament on Saturday night, sweeping Phoenix Suns teammate Deandre Ayton in the best-of-three final.

"I played a lot growing up," Booker said. "It's all about timing and eye coordination."

ESPN broadcast the three-day, 16-player Xbox One competition. The last NBA games were played March 11, the day Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert tested positive for the coronavirus.

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL/MLB

First-year coaches feeling effects of shutdown most

BY JOHN MARSHALL
Associated Press

Nick Rolovich dived right in when Washington State hired him in January. Like all first-year coaches, he had to make up ground in a hurry.

There were assistants to hire, a roster to learn, players and administrators to meet. He had to reassure the most recent signees, begin work on securing future recruiting classes. Rolovich also had to set expectations for coaches and players while implementing new offensive and defensive systems.

Just when it seemed like things were up and rolling, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The ensuing national shutdown hurt coaches across college football as they prepare for next season, but it was particularly difficult on programs with first-year coaches trying to build something from the ground up.

"I think most people would say it'd be not advantageous for a first-year coach," Rolovich said. "We tend to think as coaches, whether it's what the money has become, or the pressure of the job, you tend to always think you need to do more and more and more."

Taking over a new program presents its own set of challenges. Coaches need all of spring to assess players and set a foundation, then build upon it in fall camp. Often, it's still not enough time, leading to growing pains for the first season, maybe more.

The pandemic wiped out all spring activities in college athletics and could possibly carry over into the fall. That erases precious time for first-year coaches to strengthen relationships with players they're only known for a month or two, provide them with hands-on instruction and evaluate what they can do on the field.

A big portion of the teaching and assessing comes during spring football workouts. The NCAA allows teams to have 15 practices and a spring game in a span of 29 consecutive days, with most wrapping up by the end of April.

Some schools were in the middle of spring practices when the shutdown hit, others were just about to start. The loss of spring workouts makes it challenging for every program, but even more for teams with first-year coaches.

The Power Five first-year coaches include Jimmy Lake at Washington, Lane Kiffin at Ole Miss, Mike Norvell at Florida State, Baylor's Dave Aranda, Missouri's Eli Drinkwitz, Boston College's Jeff Hafley,

Mike Leach at Mississippi State, Sam Pittman at Arkansas, Michigan State's Mel Tucker and Karl Dorrell at Colorado.

"I'd be lying if I said that doesn't hurt us," Pittman said. "We know our players as well as we can in the short period of time that we've been together, but man, it would have been nice to see what they can do and how they react to coaching and how they react to techniques and things of that nature. We just weren't able to do it."

Coaches like Rolovich and Pittman, who was hired on Dec. 8, had a few months to begin molding their programs before the outbreak.

Dorrell had a few weeks.

A former Buffaloes assistant, Dorrell returned to Boulder on Feb. 23 after Mel Tucker left to become Michigan State's head coach. Dorrell worked quickly to hire coaches, interview his players and begin laying the schematic groundwork.

Colorado's spring football was suspended indefinitely three days before the first practice, leaving Dorrell and his staff no chance to work with their players on the field.

"I'm not looking at it as a detriment just because I'm new. I look at it like everybody's dealing with this," he said. "I know that they're all under the same guidance and standards of what's going on right now with our country, so from our perspective, we're just going to try to maximize whatever chance we get with our players."

Coaches across the country are trying to navigate the locked-down, no-football world of the pandemic, preparing for a season while not knowing when it will begin. Meetings between coaches, players and positional groups are done virtually as teams do the best they can to ensure they're ready when football starts up again, whenever that is.

The first-year coaches are also using the time to get to know their players and make sure there's still a connection when they're allowed to return to the field.

"I'm working through our roster, calling about 15 or so guys a day and spending time with them, getting to know their families, getting to know their daily routine, getting to know their goals and their vision for themselves and their futures and how I can help with that," Aranda said. "I think when it's slowed down to the point to where it is now, it allows us to fill in that space and that time with people."

AP Sports Writers Arnie Stapleton in Denver, Dave Skretta in Kansas City, Stephen Hawkins in Dallas, Tim Booth in Seattle and Nicholas Geranios in Spokane, Washington, contributed to this story.



SAMANTHA BAKER/AP

Arkansas' Sam Pittman is among first-year coaches trying to get to know players. The national shutdown hurt coaches across college football but it was particularly difficult on programs with first-year coaches trying to build something new from the ground up.



NICK WASS/AP

Head groundskeeper Nicole Sherry waters the infield at Oriole Park at Camden Yards in Baltimore last season. With the start of the season indefinitely on hold because, there is more time for the grass to keep growing and strengthen for the season.

Mild winter, no games aid fields around majors

BY STEPHEN HAWKINS
Associated Press

Nicole Sherry poked some holes in the turf at Camden Yards, cut the grass and then left the ballpark about the same time the Baltimore Orioles should have been wrapping up their season opener.

"What a beautiful day it would have been for a ballgame," said Sherry, the head groundskeeper for the Orioles. "It was kind of surreal because I was thinking, 'Technically, this is opening day.'"

Camden Yards was all green and would have been ready for what was going to be Major League Baseball's earliest start, March 26. Then the season was put on hold indefinitely because of the coronavirus pandemic.

A mild winter was beneficial to Oriole Park, and many other ballparks often battered by brutally cold temperatures, snow and ice. Now the grass has even longer to grow, get greener and strengthen before there will be any games.

A decade into the Minnesota Twins playing home games outside, the Target Field natural turf is in really good shape after an earlier-than-usual thaw.

"There was no rot or disease or anything that we could see that had damaged anything," said Matt Hoy, the team's senior vice president of operations. "When you look at it from up in the upper level and look down at the field, it looked gorgeous."

When preparing for what would have been their home opener Thursday, the Twins split their grounds crew into two groups, working at different times, to maximize social distancing on the field.

"Somebody will be there pretty much every day dealing with the grass and making sure that we'll be ready to go at a moment's notice, or when players are here, they'll be able to go out and do long toss on the field, should they need it," Hoy said.

Roger Bossard, in his 54th season as a groundskeeper with the White Sox, usually returns from spring training in Arizona to inches of snow on the home field in Chicago. Only four years ago, his crew was using jackhammers to get ice off the infield.

"The weather has been really lenient this year," Bossard said. "If they were to play baseball in four days, I personally would be ready. The majority of times, I can't say that when I come back."

"The Sodbather" is a third-generation

groundskeeper, having started working with his dad, Gene, in 1967, and becoming head groundskeeper in 1983. Bossard's grandfather, Emil, was the longtime groundskeeper for the Cleveland Indians.

The grounds crew at Kauffman Stadium had already greened the field for what was supposed to be the home opener for the Kansas City Royals last Thursday. They also repaired the warning track damaged during the installation of new foul poles.

"The playing field will still need to be taken care of with mowing and other grass care needs now that we are entering the growing season," said Isaac Riffel, senior director of ballpark operations for the Royals.

Six months after winning the World Series, the Washington Nationals were also supposed to play their home opener last Thursday. New turf was installed in February at Nationals Park after an offseason event there from late November to early January that included an ice-skating rink.

A skeleton crew is now maintaining the field, cutting it periodically and checking the moisture content of the new turf.

"If there was a game tomorrow, they would have been cutting the grass every single day," said Frank Gambino, the Nationals' senior vice president of ballpark operations. "Until a game is scheduled, they'll probably just do it maybe two to three times a week."

There is no concern about natural turf at Marlins Park in Miami this spring. After persistent trouble keeping the grass healthy in the stadium with a retractable roof, synthetic grass was installed this offseason.

Those holes that Sherry poked into the Baltimore turf help produce better roots, which should be helpful if the season stretches deeper into the fall. Sherry said the focus turned to "getting the grass more durable than anything else" after the season was delayed.

"Who knows what the summer is going to bring as far as heat, humidity and thunderstorms?" Sherry said. "But, for now, being able to kind of baby the grass more than if the season would have already started is crucial to get those roots as stable and healthy as possible to get us through the month of November if needed."

AP Sports Writers Dave Campbell, David Ginsburg, Howard Fendrich, Andrew Seligman, Dave Skretta and Steven Wine contributed to this report.

GOLF

Memorable heartaches haunt the Masters

Close calls, chokes left lasting impressions on many of the game's greatest competitors

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

For every fist pump from Tiger Woods, there are images of Greg Norman's lonely walk across Hogan Bridge as he loses the last of his six-shot lead and heads for more heartache at the Masters.

Jack Nicklaus had his famous charge on the back nine. Ed Sneed infamously lost a three-shot lead with bogeys on his last three holes, and then watched Fuzzy Zoeller win the first sudden-death playoff in 1979.

"All the condolences in the world wouldn't fix the hurt inside him," said Tom Watson, who also was in the playoff, as he sat next to a shaken Sneed for an interview when it was over.

At the Masters, players who never slipped on a green jacket can be as memorable as those who did.

Tom Weiskopf holds a footnote in Masters history with the most runner-up finishes — four — without ever winning. He was tied for the lead on the back nine in 1974. He had the lead with three holes to play in 1975 when he made bogey on the 16th hole as Nicklaus went on to a fifth green jacket.

"I know one thing," Weiskopf said that day. "I will win this tournament one day, and my green coat will be tailor made."

Curtis Strange didn't suffer as much as Norman or Weiskopf, or players like Tom Kite, David Duval and Ken Venturi, all of whom had multiple chances. He still thinks about being tied at the turn with Larry Mize in 1987, the year Mize holed a 140-foot chip in a playoff to beat — who else? — Norman.

His Masters memory is more tied to 1985, when he had a four-shot lead on the back nine and twice hit into water on the par 5s as Bernhard Langer won the first of two green jackets.



Greg Norman falls to the ground after missing his shot for an eagle on the 15th hole during final round play of the 1996 Masters as he became the only player to lose a six-shot lead in a major.

DAVE MARTIN/AP

"In my case, and most others, the sting of defeat lasts longer than the thrill of victory," Strange said Friday. "Is that a sick way to look at it? Maybe for those who have never been there. But it's reality."

That's true at most big golf tournaments. Even so, Strange believes it is amplified at the Masters because it's the one major that returns every year to the course, especially one as dynamic as Augusta National.

It takes something spectacular to remember failures at other majors — Jean Van de Velde at Carnoustie, Phil Mickelson at Winged Foot, Mike Reid at Kemper Lakes in the PGA Championship.

Jordan Spieth went wire-to-wire and tied the 72-hole record set by Woods. One year later, he lost a five-shot lead on the back

nine, highlighted by a quadruple-bogey 7 on the par-3 12th hole.

Which one is more memorable?

"It goes back to the familiarity every golf fan has with the course," Duval said. "It's not like going to Pebble every 10 years, or Oakmont. I think the continuity has a lot to do with it."

Norman stands out as the face of failure at the Masters, even though Weiskopf has more silver medals. Then again, Weiskopf never lost a six-shot lead as Norman did in 1996. Weiskopf didn't lose in a playoff to an improbable chip.

Norman contributed to his own failures. Often forgotten are his four straight birdies to tie for the lead in 1986, only to send a 4-iron into the gallery on the 18th and make bogey. He did the same thing three years later, mak-

ing three straight birdies only to come up short with a 5-iron and hit a poor chip to bogey No. 18 and finish one out of a playoff.

Norman has company, of course.

Venturi shot 80 in the final round of 1956 with a chance to become the only amateur in a green jacket. He lost as a pro four years later when Arnold Palmer birdied the last two to win by one shot.

Duval was in the mix four straight years and never won the green jacket. He missed out on a playoff in 1998 when Mark O'Meara birdied the 18th hole from 20 feet. "Don't worry, David, nobody ever makes that putt," chairman Jack Stephens told him as they watched from Jones Cabin.

The run ended in 2001 when

Duval was the last player to try to stop Woods from a sweep of the majors. But his 7-iron flew the 16th green — he still doesn't know how — and his birdie putts from 12 feet and 5 feet on the last two holes didn't fall.

No loss was more painful to watch than Scott Hoch missing a 2-foot par putt on the 10th hole in a playoff in 1989. Faldo beat him with a birdie on the next hole.

Mention the name Roberto de Vicenzo, and the first thing that comes to mind is not his two-shot victory over Nicklaus in the 1967 British Open. It's the playoff he missed at the Masters the following spring in the cruelest ruling. The Argentine signed for a 4 on the 17th hole when he made a 3. He had to keep the higher score and lost by one to Bob Goaly.

"What a stupid I am," De Vicenzo said.

A simple mistake. The wrong kind of memory. There's no shortage of those at the Masters.



Associated Press

Ed Sneed lost a three-shot lead at the 1979 Masters with bogeys on his last three holes.



ERIC RISSBERG/AP

Jim Nantz, left, shown with Phil Mickelson in February of 2019, had called the Final Four and the Masters since 1985, but this year, is at home because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

Jim Nantz couldn't figure out why he was getting text messages from friends about the 1986 Masters, unaware it was the first of eight Masters being shown during a second week in April unlike any other.

That was his first Masters for CBS Sports.

"And there's no doubt about it. The Bear has come out of hibernation," he says from the 16th tower after Jack Nicklaus makes birdie to tie for the lead. Nantz was relieved to learn later he had not repeated what already had been said.

He received far more texts on Monday night, some of them well-intended jokes — "How is that one shining moment coming together?" — about the NCAA basketball championship that wasn't played.

For the last three decades, Nantz has been the voice in living rooms and restaurant bars and anywhere else fans were

"I miss it so much I can't articulate it."

Jim Nantz
CBS broadcaster

watching the two biggest sporting events on the Spring calendar — the Final Four and the Masters over a span of nine days.

He has been the lead voice from Augusta National since 1989, and he took over play-by-play duties at the Final Four for CBS a year later. He has worked both events since 1986. The itinerary is taxing and exhilarating.

"Do I miss it? I miss it so much I can't even articulate it," Nantz said Wednesday evening from his home in Pebble Beach, Calif. "Am I letting it consume me? Not at all. There are far bigger things going on than anyone having a pity party for me be-

cause my 34-year streak comes to an end. We're in a crisis. People are suffering. People have lost loved ones, and there's more to come."

The objective is to stay in the present and "try to dislodge yourself from this time warp."

"I've never missed the ceremonial shot," Nantz said.

The club did not have an honorary starter from 2003 to 2006. The other years, Nantz would arrive at the CBS compound about 7:15 a.m., walk briskly up the hill toward the cabins and wander over to join thousands watching legends — Gene Sarazen, Byron Nelson and Sam Snead his first year, now Nicklaus and Gary Player.

"It touches me," he said. "One of those moments where there's a passage of time," he said. "You realize another year has gone by and you're looking at your heroes trying to strike one shot. It's powerful. I'm going to miss that a lot."

Nantz adjusting to no Final Four, Masters

SPORTS



Oilers' Cave dies of brain bleed at 25

Sports briefs, Page 21

VIRUS OUTBREAK

A year unlike any other



Iconic sports cities turn eerie during coronavirus shutdown

By PAUL NEWBERRY
Associated Press**T**hey are cities defined by iconic sporting events.

When Augusta comes up, one instantly thinks of the Masters. If Omaha is mentioned, it's often in the same breath with the College World Series. It's hard to imagine Louisville without the Kentucky Derby.

"This is who we are," said Jason Fink, the chamber of commerce president in

In the coming weeks, The Associated Press will look at cities like Augusta, Williamsport, Omaha, and others with names synonymous with the sporting events they host, to examine how the pandemic has dealt these communities an especially wrenching blow.

Williamsport, Pa., which has been synonymous with the Little League World Series since it was founded in 1947.

They can certainly relate to that senti-

ment in Augusta.

The Masters got its start in 1934 on the grounds of a former nursery and the golf tournament is usually held the first full week of April.

Last week, the city looked like a ghost town.

Augusta National Golf Club was all locked up. Washington Road, which should have been teeming with cars and commerce and humanity, is desolate instead.

A tradition unlike any other has become a year unlike any since the end of World War II.

No ticket brokers offering to buy and sell the coveted badges. No long lines trying to land a table at TBoyz steakhouse.

"It's a big hiccup," said Mark Cumins, who co-founded TBoyz in 1985 and serves up a who's who of golfers, athletes and celebrities during Masters week. "It's not going to destroy us, but it hurts."

SEE EERIE ON PAGE 21

Augusta National Golf Club is sits empty on what would've been the first practice round for the Masters last week in Augusta, Ga. For cities like Augusta, where these defining yearly events are deeply intertwined with the local community, the shutdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic is an especially tough blow.

CURTIS COMPTON, ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION/AP

TO OUR READERS

As the sports world pauses to join the rest of the world in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, you will see fewer sports stories in Stars and Stripes. We look forward to resuming our normal coverage when the leagues and governing bodies determine it is safe for athletes and fans to return to competition.

